

Act III

LADY'S LAST STAKE.

Scene I



De Wilde pinx.

Long sculp.

MRS BLAND, or MISS NOTABLE.

Miss Not. *So, this has been a day of business.*

London Printed for J. Bell British Library Strand June 23 1795.

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Craig del.

Heath sculp.

London Printed for J. Bell British Library Strand June 10th 1795.

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THE
LADY'S LAST STAKE;
OR,
THE WIFE'S RESENTMENT.

A
COMEDY,

BY COLLEY CIBBER, ESQ.

ADAPTED FOR
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,
AS PERFORMED AT
THE THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOK,
By Permission of the Manager.

The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation; and those
printed in Italics are the Additions of the Theatre.

LONDON:

Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of JOHN BELL,
British Library, STRAND,
Bookseller to His Royal Highness the PRINCE OF WALES.

M DCC XCV.

THE
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OR,

THE WIFE'S RESENTMENT.

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PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

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Printed for the Proprietor, and the Directors of John Bull,

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M DCCC XX

TO THE MOST NOBLE THE
MARQUIS OF KENT,
LORD CHAMBERLAIN

OF HER MAJESTY'S HOUSEHOLD, &c.

THE utmost success I ever proposed from this play, was, that it might reach the taste of a few good judges, and from thence plead a sort of a title to your Lordship's protection; and if the most just and candid critics are not the greatest flatterers, I have not failed in my proposal. As for those gentlemen that thrust themselves forward upon the stage before a crowded audience, as if they resolved to play themselves, and save the actor the trouble of presenting them; they indeed, as they are above instruction, so they scorn to be diverted by it, and will as soon allow me a good voice as a genius. I did not intend it should entertain any, that never come with a design to sit out a play; and therefore, without being much mortified, am content such persons should dislike it. If I would have been less instructive, I might easily have had a louder, though not a more valuable applause. But I shall always prefer a fixed and general attention, before the noisy roars of the gallery. A play without a just moral, is a poor and trivial undertaking; and it is from the success of such pieces, that Mr. Collier was furnished with an advantageous pretence of laying his unmerciful axe to the root of the stage. Gaming is a vice that has undone more innocent principles than any one folly that is in fashion, therefore I chose to expose it to the fair sex in its most hideous form, by reducing a woman of honour to stand the presumptuous addresses of a man, whom neither her virtue or inclination would let her have the least taste to. Now 't is not impossible but some man of fortune, who has a handsome lady, and a great deal of money to throw away, may, from this startling hint, think it worth his while to find his wife some less hazardous diversion. If that should ever happen, my end of writing this play is answered; and if it may

boast of any favours from the town, I now must own they are entirely owing to your Lordship's protection of the theatre: for, without a union of the best actors, it must have been impossible for it to have received a tolerable justice in the performance.

The stage has for many years, till late, groaned under the greatest discouragements, which have been very much, if not wholly, owing to the mismanagement or avarice of those who have awkwardly governed it. Great sums have been ventured upon empty projects, and hopes of immoderate gains; and when those hopes have failed, the loss has been tyrannically deducted out of the actor's salary. And if your Lordship had not redeemed them, they were very near being wholly laid aside, or, at least, the use of their labour was to be swallowed up, in the pretended merit of singing and dancing. I don't offer this as a reflection upon music, (for I allow and feel its charms) but it has been the misfortune of that, as well as poetry, to have been too long in the hands of those whose taste and fancy are utterly insensible of their use and power. And though your Lordship foresaw, and experience tells us, that both diversions would be better encouraged under their separate endeavours, yet this was a scheme, that could never be beat into the impenetrable heads of those that might have honestly paid the labourers their hire, and put the profits of both into their own pockets. Nay, even the opera, though the town has neither grudged it pay nor equipage, from either the wilfulness or ignorance of the same general, we see, was not able to take the field till December.

My Lord, there is nothing difficult to a body of English people, when they are unanimous, and well commanded. And though your Lordship's tenderness of oppressing is so very just, that you have rather stayed to convince a man of your good intentions to him, than to do him even a service against his will: yet since your Lordship has so happily begun the establishment of the separate diversions, we live in hope, that the same justice and resolution will still persuade you to go as successfully through with it.

But while any man is suffered to confound the industry and use of them, by acting publicly, in opposition to your Lordship's equal intentions, under a false and intricate pretence of not being able to comply with them; the town is likely to be more entertained with the private dissensions, than the public performance of either, and the actors in a perpetual fear and necessity of petitioning your Lordship every season for new relief.

To succour the distressed is the first mark of greatness, and your Lordship is eminently distinguished for a virtue that certainly claims the next place to it. The disinterested choice and manner of your Lordship's disposing places in your gift, are proofs that you always have the claims of merit under your first and tenderest consideration. And from the assurance of this thought, my Lord, the stage, the poets, and the players, lay their cause, their hopes, and utmost expectations at your Lordship's feet for support and protection.

I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble,

And most obedient servant,

COLLEY CIBBER.

PROLOGUE.

SINCE plays are but the mirrors of our lives,
And soon or late mankind are chain'd to wives ;
Since those dissolveless fetters too must be
Our greatest happiness or misery ;
What subject ought, in reason, more to please ye,
Than an attempt to make those chains sit easy ?
Though in the noose so many souls seem curst,
Pray who's in fault ?—For when you've said your worst,
You all did feel it happiness—at first.
Therefore our author drew you once the life
Of careless husband, and enduring wife,
Who, by her patience (though much out of fashion)
Retriev'd, at last, her wanderer's inclination.
Yet some there are, who still arraign the play,
At her tame temper shock'd, as who should say—
The price, for a dull husband, was too much to pay.
Had he been strangled sleeping, who should hurt ye ?
When so provok'd—revenge had been a virtue.
—Well then—to do his former moral right,
Or set such measures in a fairer light,
He gives you now a wife, he's sure, in fashion,
Whose wrongs use modern means for reparation.
No fool, that will her life in sufferings waste,
But furious, proud, and insolently chaste ;
Who, more in honour jealous than in love,
Resolves resentment shall her wrongs remove,
Not to be cheated with his civil face,
But scorns his falsehood, and to prove him base,
Mobb'd up in hack triumphant dogs him to the place.

*These modish measures, we presume, you'll own,
 Are oft what wives of gallantry have done ;
 But if their consequence should meet the curse
 Of making a provok'd aversion worse,
 Then you his former moral must allow,
 Or own the satire just he shews you now.
 Some other follies too our scenes present,
 Some warn the fair from gaming, when extravagant.
 But when undone, you see the dreadful stake,
 That hard-press'd virtue is reduc'd to make ;
 Think not the terrors you behold her in,
 Are rudely drawn t' expose what has been seen ;
 But, as the friendly muse's tenderest way,
 To let her dangers warn you from the depth of play.*

These modest measures, and private, and low,
 And of what nature of gallantry have done;
 But if their consequence should reach the court,
 Of making a proverb, a proverbial story,
 Then for his former moral must allow,
 Or even the satire just he speaks you hear,
 Some other fellow too our friend present.

Dramatis Personae.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

Lord WRONGLOVE,	-	-	Mr. Wroughton.
Lord GEORGE BRILLIANT,	-	-	Mr. Lewis.
Sir FRIENDLY MORAL,	-	-	Mr. Aickin.
BRUSH,	-	-	Mr. Kennedy.

Women.

Lady WRONGLOVE,	-	-	Mrs. Bates.
Lady GENTLE,	-	-	Mrs. Warren.
Mrs. CONQUEST,	-	-	Mrs. Wells.
Miss NOTABLE,	-	-	Mrs. Brown.
Mrs. HARTSHORN,	-	-	Mrs. Pitt.



THE
LADY'S LAST STAKE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Lord Wronglove's Apartment. Lord WRONGLOVE alone,
musings.

Lord Wronglove.
My wife—as abundance of other men of quality's wives
are—is a miserable woman—ask her the reason, she'll
tell you—husband: ask me, I say, wife—all's entirely
owing to her own temper.

Enter Mrs. HARTSHORN.

Mrs. Harts. My Lady desires to know if your Lordship
pleases to spare her the chariot this morning?

Lord W. Hah! That's as much as to say, I have a mind
to guess when, and how you go out this morning. [*Aside.*]
Well, the chariot is at her service. [*Exit Harts.*] This
continual jealousy is insupportable. What's to be done
with her? What's her complaint? Who's the aggressor?
I'll e'en refer the matter fairly to my own conscience, and
if she cast me there, I'll do her justice; if not, though the
cost were ten times hers, I'll make myself easy for the rest
of my life—Let me see—“as to the fact I'm charged with,

“ viz. That I have feloniously embezzled my inclinations
“ among the rough and smooth conversation of several un-
“ daunted gentlewomen, and so forth. That, I think,
“ since it must be proved against me, I had best plead
“ guilty to. Be it so—Very well—A terrible charge
“ indeed : and now—”

Enter BRUSH.

Brush. My lady desires to know if your lordship pleases to dine at home to-day.

Lord *W.* Right ! another gentle enquiry. [*Aside.*] Why, tell her 't is impossible to guess, but her ladyship may do as she pleases. [*Exit Brush.*] But to go on.—“ Now let's
“ hear the defendant, and then proceed to judgment and
“ damages. Well ! the defendant says, that 't is true he
“ was in love with madam up to her proud heart's wishes,
“ but hoped that marriage was his end of servitude, that
“ then her wise reserve, her pride, and other fine lady's airs
“ would be all laid aside.—No, her ladyship was still the
“ same unconquered heroine : if being endured could give
“ me happiness, it was mine ; if not, she knew herself, and
“ should not bend below her sex's value—I bore this long,
“ then urged her duty ; that this reserve of humour was
“ inconsistent with her being a friend, a wife, or a compa-
“ nion. She said 't was Nature's fault, and I but talked in
“ vain. Upon this I found my patience began to have
“ enough on 't : so I e'en made her invincibleship a low
“ bow, and told her I would dispose of my time in plea-
“ sures which were a little more com-at-able ; which plea-
“ sures I have found, and she—has found out, but truly she
“ won't bear it : and though she scorned to love, she 'll con-
“ descend to hate ; she 'll have redress, revenge, and repa-
“ ration ; so that if I have a mind to be easy at home, I

" need but tremble at her anger, down on my knees, confess, beg pardon, promise amendment, keep my word, and
 " the business is done. Now venerable, human conscience,
 " speak, must I do this only to purchase what the greatness
 " of her soul has taught me to be indifferent to? Am I
 " bound to fast, because her ladyship has no appetite? Shall
 " threats and brow-beatings fright me into justice, where
 " my own will's a law? No, no, no; positively no: I am
 " lord of my own heart, sure, and whoever thinks to enter
 " at my humour, shall speak me very fair. Most generous
 " conscience, I give you thanks for this deliverance! and,
 " since I'm positive, I've little Nature on my side too,
 " Madam may now go on with her noble resentment if she
 " pleases."

Enter BRUSH.

Brush. Lord George Brilliant gives his service, and if your lordship's at leisure he'll wait upon you.

Lord *W.* Give my service, say I shall be glad to see him.
 [*Exit Brush.*] D'ye hear! Brush! [*Brush returns.*]

Brush. My lord?

Lord *W.* Is the footman come back yet?

Brush. Yes, my lord, he called at White's, but there's no letter for your lordship.

Lord *W.* Very well. [*Exit Brush.*] I can't imagine the meaning of it. Sure I have not played with the babyfaced girl 'till I'm in love with her; and yet her disappointing me yesterday does not slip so easily through my memory, as things of this gentle nature used to do. A very phlegmatic symptom. " And yet if she had come, 'tis ten to one, the
 " greatest relief she could have given me, would have been
 " a fair excuse to get rid of her—Hum! ay, ay, all's
 " safe. She has only stirred my pride I find, my heart's as

"sound as my constitution, and yet her not coming, nor
"excusing it, puzzles me."

Enter BRUSH.

Brush. A letter for your lordship.

Lord W. Who brought it?

Brush. Snug, the chairman.

Lord W. Oh! 'tis right, now we shall be let into the secret. [*Reads.*] 'I won't beg your pardon for not coming yesterday, because it was not my fault, but indeed I'm sorry I could not.' Kind, however, though it is possible she may lie too. 'To be short, old Teizer smoaks the business, poss.' By her stile, the child seems to have a great genius for iniquity: but who the deuce is old Teizer? Oh! that must be her uncle, Sir Friendly Moral! 'Smoaks the business, poss!' Very well. 'For he watched me all day, as if he had been in love with me himself: but you may depend upon me this afternoon about five, at the same place, till when, dear Dismal, adieu!' [*Tears the letter.*] Well said! 'egad, this girl will debauch me! What pity 't is her person does not spread like her understanding! But she is one of Eve's own sisters, born a woman. Bid the fellow stay for an answer.

[*Exit Brush.*

Enter Mrs. HARTSHORN.

Harts. My lady desires to know if your lordship pleases to drink any tea?

Lord W. What a mess of impertinence have I had this morning! But I'll make my advantage of this. [*Aside.*]—Pray, thank your lady, and tell her I desire she'll be pleased to come and drink some with me. [*Exit Harts.*] When a man has a little private folly upon his hands, 't is prudent to

keep his wife in good humour, at least, till the frailty's thoroughly committed. [Exit.

Enter Lady WRONGLOVE and BRUSH.

L. Wrong. Where's my lord?

Brush. I believe he's writing in his closet, madam? if your ladyship pleases, I'll go and see.

L. Wrong. No, stay—I'll—I'll—wait without.

Brush. Jealous, by Jupiter! I must look sharp I see.

[Retires.

L. Wrong. Writing! then I am confirmed. Not a day passes without some fresh discovery of his perfidiousness. "This usage is beyond patience. Sure men think that wives "are stocks or stones, without all sense of injuries, or only "born and bound to bear them! But since his villainies "want the excuse of my deserving them, I'll let him see I "dare resent them as I ought. I'll prove them first, and "then revenge them with my scorn." Hum!—what's here? A torn letter! Ha! some fresh, some undiscovered slut! Here, Hartshorn!

Enter HARTSHORN.

Go to the door this minute, and tell the impudent fellow there, that my lord says the letter requires no answer; and if he offers to bring any more, he'll have his limbs broke.

[Exit Hartshorn.

Brush. [Behind.] Ha! this was a lucky discovery! Between my lord, or my lady, it's hard if I don't mend my place by it.

L. Wrong. It is not yet so torn, but I may read it—'T will cost his wit some trouble to evade this proof, I'm sure. I'll have it pieced, and send it him. I'll let him

see I know him still. A base, a mean—"Huh! now he's nauseous to me!" [Exit.

Re-enter Lord WRONGLOVE with a letter.

Lord *W.* Here, give this to the porter.

Brush. My lord, the porter's gone. [Smiling.

Lord *W.* Gone! how so!—What does the fellow sneer at?

Brush. My lord, I beg your lordship's pardon for my boldness, but perhaps it may be more useful to you than my silence: I saw something that happened just now——

Lord *W.* What's the matter?

Brush. While your lordship was writing within, my lady, I fancied by her looks, suspected something by Snug's being at the door (for she enquires every mortal's business that comes to speak with your lordship), but here she came, and bid me go out of the room. Upon which I made bold to watch her at the door, where I saw her pick up the pieces of that letter your lordship tore just now: and then she flew into a violent passion, and ordered the porter to be sent away without his answer.

Lord *W.* No matter; you know where to find him.

Brush. Yes, my lord, he plies at White's.

Lord *W.* Run after him quick, tell him it was a mistake, and that's his answer. [*Gives a letter.—Exit Brush*] Let me see—I shall certainly hear of this letter from my wife; and 't is probable her pride will have as much pleasure in reproaching me, as her good nature would in finding me innocent. I must take care not to let her grow upon me. "To bear the open insolence of a wife, is a punishment that exceeds both the crime and the pleasure of any favours the sex can give us. But why am I so apprehensive of a poor woman's being out of humour? My gravity for the matter would be as ridiculous as her passion. The worst on 't

"is, that in our matrimonial squabbles, one side's generally
 "forced to make a confidence with their servants: I am re-
 "duced now to trust this fellow—But I can make it his
 "interest to be secret——"

Enter Mrs. HARTSHORN with tea.

Mrs. *Harts*. Here's your lordship's tea.

Lord *W*. Oh, thank you, Mrs. Hartshorn!—Where's your lady?

Mrs. *Harts*. My lord, she's not very well, and desired me to give your lordship this. [*Gives a letter.*]

Lord *W*. So, now it comes——Let's see——Ha! the child's letter, faith, carefully pieced together again—How! here's some of her own hand too. [*Reads.*] 'Something has happened that makes me unfit for tea; I would tell you what, but that I find 't is the fashion for married people to have separate secrets.'——Humph! This is speaking pretty plain. Now, if I take no notice of it, I shall have her walk by me in the house with a dumb, gloomy insolence for a fortnight together. Suppose I let her—No—better talk with her——The most violent jealousy is often subject to the grossest credulity. I'll make one push for't however; 'tis certainly the most prudent to come off if I can—Mrs. Hartshorn, pray, tell your lady I must needs see her; I have something to say to her that will make her laugh, though she were dying of the vapours.

Mrs. *Harts*. My lord, I'll tell her. [*Exit*]

Lord *W*. Or suppose her jealousy is too wise for my wit, say she won't be imposed upon. At worst, I'll carry it on with such an excess of assurance, that I'll give her the mortification of thinking that I believe I have deceived her.
 "She shan't have the pleasure of knowing she insults me;
 "I'll crush the very hope of her resentment, and by seem-

"ing always easy myself, make her jealousy a private plague
 "to her insolence. She shall never catch me owning any
 "thing. Her pride would have its end indeed, if she could
 "once bring me to the humble shame of confession."—Oh,
 she's here!

Enter Lady WRONGLOVE, very grave.

L. *Wrong*. D'ye want me for any thing?

Lord *W*. Ay, child, sit down. Hartshorn told me you
 were not well. So I had a mind to divert you a little. Such
 a ridiculous adventure sure! Ha, ha, ha!

L. *Wrong*. I am as well as I expect to be, though perhaps
 not so easy to be diverted.

Lord *W*. Ha, ha ha! no matter for that, if I don't divert
 you—Here, take your dish, child—Ha, ha, ha!

L. *Wrong*. I sha' n't drink any.

Lord *W*. Ha, ha, ha! Do you know now, that I know
 what makes you so out of humour? Ha, ha!

L. *Wrong*. Upon my word, you have a good assurance.

[Turning away.

"Lord *W*. Ha, ha, ha! Do you know too, that I am now
 "insulting you with the most ridiculous malice, and yet
 "with all the comical justice in the world? Ha, ha!"

L. *Wrong*. But, my lord, all this is mightily thrown
 away upon me. I never had any great genius to humour,
 besides, that little I have, you know, I have now reason to
 be out of. And to spare you the vain trouble of endeavour-
 ing to impose upon me, I must tell you, that this usage is fit
 only for the common wretches you converse with.

Lord *W*. By my soul, I don't believe the like ever hap-
 pened in all the accidents of human life! Such an incredible,
 such a romantic complication of blunders, "that, let me
 "perish, if I think Moliere's *Cocu Imaginaire* has half so

“ many turns in it, as you shall hear, child.” In the first place, the porter makes a blunder, by mistaking the place for the person, and enquires for me, instead of one at my house; my blockhead, Brush, here, carries it on, and with his own blundering hand gives his mistress’s letter to me. No sooner was that mistake set to rights, but the pieces of the letter fall into your hands, and (as if fortune resolved the jest should not be lost) you really fancied it: came from a mistress of mine; and so, by way of comical resentment, fall out of humour with your tea, and send it to me again, ha, ha, ha!

“ *L. Wrong.* This evasion, my lord, is the worst stuff that ever any sure was made of.

“ *Lord W.* ’T wont do, I find, but ’tis no matter, I’ll go on. [*Aside.*] Ha, ha! And so, upon this, what does me I, but instead of making you easy, lets you go on with the fancy, till I was thoroughly convinced your suspicion was real, and then comes me about with the most unexpected catastrophe, and tells you the whole truth of the matter, ha, ha, ha!

“ *L. Wrong.* A very pretty farce indeed, my lord! but by the thinness of the plot, I see you have not given yourself much contrivance.

“ *Lord W.* No, upon my soul, ’t was all so directly in nature, that the least fiction in the world had knocked it all to pieces.”

L. Wrong. It’s very well, my lord; I am as much diverted with the entertainment, I suppose, as you expected I should be.

Lord W. Ha, ha! Why, did I not tell you I should divert you?

L. Wrong. You have indeed, my lord, to astonishment. Though there’s one part of the design you left out in the

relation, and that was the answer that you wrote (by mistake I suppose) to your man's mistress.

Lord *W.* Oh, that—why, that was—that was—the—the—the—the answer? Ay, ay, the answer was sent after the porter; because you know, if he had gone away without it, 't was fifty to one the poor fellow's mistress would not have been reconciled to him this fortnight. But did you observe, child, what a coarse familiar stile the puss writes.

L. *Wrong.* Coarseness of stile is no proof that the puss might not be mistress to a man of quality. And I must tell you, my lord, when men of quality can find their account in engaging with women whose highest modesty is impudence, methinks they should not wonder if men of their own principles, whose impudence is often mistaken for wit, should talk their wives into the same failing.

Lord *W.* Let me die, child, if you ha' n't a great deal of good sense. [*Sipping his tea.*]

L. *Wrong.* 'T is not the first time that an affronted wife has convinced the world of her personal merit, to the severe repentance of her husband.

Lord *W.* Abundance of good sense.

Enter BRUSH.

Brush. Lord George, my lord.

Lord *W.* Desire him to walk in—Nay, you need not go, child.

L. *Wrong.* I am not in a humour now for company—There's a couple of you. [*Exit.*]

Lord *W.* What pains this silly woman takes to weary me! always widening the breach between us, as if 't were her interest to have no hopes of an accommodation, as if she felt no pain in making her own life wretched, so she could but

embitter mine—Let her go on—Here's one that always sweetens it.

Enter Lord GEORGE.

Ah, my Gregory! "Kiss."

Lord G. "And kiss, and kiss again, my dear—By "Ganymede, there's nectar on thy lips. Oh, the pleasure "of a friend, to tell the joy!"—Oh, Wronglove! such hopes!

Lord W. Hey-day! what's the matter?

Lord G. Such soft ideas! such thrilling thoughts of aching pleasure!—In short, I have too much on't.

Lord W. Thou strange piece of wild nature!

"Lord G. Death! I tell thee, man, I'm above half seas "over.

"Lord W. One would rather think half the seas were "over you; for, in my mind, you do n't talk like a man "above water.

"Lord G. Pr'ythee, forgive me. How is it possible I "should, when all my faculties are drowned in joy?

"Lord G. Then, pr'ythee, my dear, float about, shut "down the sluice of your rapture, before the nothingness "of your words gets over the banks of your understanding." In plain common sense, let's know the business.

Lord G. Why, the business, in one word—it's impossible to tell you.

Lord W. Impossible! Will you drink any tea?

"Lord G. Tea! thou soft, thou sober, sage, and vene- "rable liquid, thou innocent pretence for bringing the "wicked of both sexes together in a morning; thou female "tongue-running, smile-smoothing, heart-opening, wink- "tipping cordial, to whose glorious insipidity I owe the "happiest moment of my life, let me fall prostrate thus, and "s—p, s—p, s—p, thus adore thee. [*Kneels and sips the tea.*]

"Lord *W.* Come, come, you silly, affected rogue, get up and talk at least like a fool to be understood,

"Lord *G.* Don't you think there's pleasure in affection, when one's heartily in good humour?

[*Very affectedly.*

"Lord *W.* Impertinent puppy! Drink your tea."

Lord *G.* Oh, Wronglove! I have been drinking tea—

[*Transported.*

Lord *W.* With some laughing ladies, I presume, whose incessant concussion of words would not let you put in a syllable, and so you are come to ease yourself upon me.

Lord *G.* Then, pr'ythee, be a friend, and let me speak.

Lord *W.* Not only blank verse, but rhyme, if you please. In the name of nonsense, go on.

Lord *G.* Swear then.

Lord *W.* Swear!

Lord *G.* Ay, swear.

"Lord *W.* Blood!—

"Lord *G.* Psha! Pr'ythee.

"Lord *W.* Nay, pray, sir, give me leave to play the fool

"in my turn; the moment you speak to be understood, I'll

"secure you a reasonable answer.

"Lord *G.*" Swear then never (to any mortal) to trust from you, to hint, or speak, of what I shall discover.

"Lord *W.* Upon my honour.

"Lord *G.* Honour! The common hackney-oath of fops,

"rakes, and sharpers: swear me by something dearer than

"thy eyes, than life or liberty.

"Lord *W.* Indeed!

"Lord *G.*" Swear me by all thy tenderest hopes in love:

by thy soft sighs of pain, proceeding from thy pleasure;

swear—

Lord *W.* I do, by something dearer to me yet—By my

short stay after possession, by my chaise after hard riding, by my easy chair after dinner, and by t'other bottle after the bill's paid, I will be secret.

Lord G. Ay, now be perjured if thou darest—Know then—at last, that generous lovely creature has said behind my back, that I am the most sober, good humour'd, and agreeably inoffensive young fellow, that ever came into a civil family. To be short, she has made me a general invitation to her house; upon which I have taken lodgings that look full into her back closet window, and drank tea with her alone this morning.

Lord W. Some humble sinner, whose only charm is being another man's mistress, I'll lay my life on' t. [*Aside.*] Well, and what did you give her?

Lord G. A bleeding heart, all studded o'er with wounds of her eyes' own making.

Lord W. That is, you pulled out your watch as you were going away, and she took a fancy to one of the seals. "Though by the device I presume it was only a "modern bauble; so "t' is probable you might not have come off much cheaper "at mother Davis's."

Lord G. "Profanation!"—To be serious then at once, I have solid hopes of my Lady Gentle.

Lord W. Hoh! hoh! Oh, thou vain, thou senseless fop! Is all this mighty rapture then only from a fine woman's being commonly civil to thee? The mere innocent effect of her good humour and breeding.

Lord G. Psha! tell not me of whence it is born, let it suffice I've form'd it into hope; let your tame, civil, secret sighers, such as never think the fair one sure till they hear the tag of her lace click, think it no cause for joy; but I have a soul that wakes, that starts up, at the least dawning cranny of a hope, and sets my every faculty on fire. She

" must, she must, she must be won——For since I have
" resolved to hope, my fancy doubly paints her beauties—
" Oh, she's all one fragrant field of charms, to pamper up
" the blood of wild desire.

" Lord *W.* Ah, George, what luscious morsels then must
" her husband take of her!

" Lord *G.* Why didst thou mention him?—Death! I can't
" bear that thought——Can she love him?—Oh, the ver-
" dant vales, the downy lawns of fruitful bliss, the over-
" flowing springs of cool refreshing beauty, that happy dog
" must revel, range, and sport in!

" Lord *W.* Nay, the woman's a fine creature, that's cer-
" tain; it's a thousand pities one can't laugh her out of
" that unfashionable folly of liking her husband, when here's
" a man of undisputed honour too, that knows the world,
" that understands love and ruin to a tittle, that would at the
" least tip of a wink rid her of all her incumbrances, set her
" at the very top of the mode, and qualify her for a separate
" maintenance in the twinkling of an hackney coach window.

" Lord *G.* Can you be a moment serious?

" Lord *W.* Faith, sir, if I am not, 't is only to make you so."

Lord *G.* You seem to think this business impracticable.

Lord *W.* Why, truly, for any great progress I see you
have made, I do n't think but it is: and if you'll take my
opinion of the woman, I do think, provided you'll allow
there's any such thing in nature, she's one of impregnable
virtue: that you can no more make a breach in her honour,
than find a flaw in her features. Bate but a little of her over-
fondness for play, she's the perfection of a good wife.

Lord *G.* Oh, your servant, sir! you own she has a pas-
sion for play then.

Lord *W.* That I can't deny; and what's worse, I doubt
she likes it a great deal better than she understands it. I hear
she has lost considerably to the Count of late.

Lord G. You must know then, that the Count is my engineer: he and I have a right understanding; whenever she plays we are sure of her money. Now he has already stripped her of all her running cash, besides eight hundred pounds upon honour: for payment of which I made him send her a downright pressing letter by me this morning. I observed her a little startled when she read it, and took that opportunity to screw myself into the secret, and offered my assistance. To be short, I addressed myself with so much tender regard to her confusion, that before we parted, I engaged this afternoon to lend her a thousand pounds of her own money to pay him.

Lord W. I confess your battery's raised against the only weak side of her virtue. But how are you sure you can work her to push her ill fortune? She may give over play. What will all your advantages signify, if she does not lose to you more than she can pay?

Lord G. Oh! I have an expedient for that too—Look you, in short, I won't spoil my plot by discovering it; a few hours will make it ripe for execution, and then—but

*There is no fear that I should tell
The joys that are unspeakable.*

“Lord W. Ha, ha! and so you are really in love, to the very extremity of passion!

“Lord G. Pr'ythee, don't laugh at me. [Affectedly.]

“Lord W. Don't you think I have heard you with a great deal of patience?

“Lord G. Nay, I know we puppies in love are tiresome.”

Lord W. And so you think that all this extravagance of your stile and gesture must have convinced me that you really care sixpence for this woman?

Lord G. Would you have me swear?

Lord *W.* Ay, come, do a little.

Lord *G.* Why, then, by all the sacred ties of honour, friendship, and restless love, had I but five thousand pounds in the whole world, and nothing else could purchase her—

Lord *W.* I dare swear you'd give it every shilling, that you really could love her, though it were only to get rid of your passion for Mrs. Conquest.

Lord *G.* Why, then, look you——

Lord *W.* You may swear till you are black in the face; but you love her, her only, indeed you do; your passion for Lady Gentle is affected. Not but I grant you'll pursue it, for when nothing's in view you're indefatigable. You are a little uneasy at the smallness of Mrs. Conquest's fortune, and would fain persuade yourself you are in love in another place——But, hark'e—you'll marry her——And so, if your chariot's at the door, you shall carry me to White's.

Lord *G.* Why, then (except myself) thou art positively the most impudent fellow upon the face of the earth. [*Ex.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

Continues. Enter Lady WRONGLOVE.

Lady Wronglove.

“WHY am I thus uneasy? Sure I am unreasonable in my
 “temper; I over-rate myself——For if the husband's vio-
 “lation of his marriage-vow is in itself so foul an injury,
 “whence is it that the law's so sparing in its provision of
 “redress? and yet 't is sure an injury, because just nature
 “makes the pain of bearing it outrageous. Oh, hard con-
 “dition! For if e'en that pain provokes the wife to move
 “for reparation, the world's gross custom makes her per-
 “haps a jest to those who should assist her. If she offends,

"the crime's unpardonable, yet if injured, has no right to compensation. It may be usual this, but, sure, 't is unnatural."

Enter Mrs. HARTSHORN.

Mrs. Harts. Madam, the porter's come back.

L. Wrong. Bring him in. [*Exit Mrs. Harts.*]

Enter Porter.

Well, friend, how far have you followed them?

Port. Why, an' it please your honour, first they both went in Lord George's chariot to White's.

L. Wrong. How long did they stay?

Port. Why, an' it please your honour, they staid, as near as I can guess, about—a very little time.

L. Wrong. Whither did they go then?

Port. Why, then they stopped a little at the coachmaker's at Charing-cross, and looked upon a small thing there they call a booby-hutch, and did not stay; and so then stopped again at the fruit-shop in Covent-garden, and then just went up to Tom's coffee house, and then went away to the toy-shop at the Temple-gate, and there they staid I can't tell you how long, an' please you.

L. Wrong. Did they buy any thing?

Port. Yes, a number of things, truly.

L. Wrong. Were they mostly for men's use, or how?

Port. Nay, I do n't know; such sort of trangams as the gentry use: I remember one was "such" a kind of a small scissars-case "as that by your honour's side," my Lord Wronglove bought it.

L. Wrong. So! that was not for me, I am sure. [*Aside.* Do you know what he paid for it?

Port. Troth, I can't say I do. They came away, an' t

like your honour, but I did not see them pay for any thing
—And so after that—

Enter Mrs. HARTSHORN.

Mrs. Harts. Young Mrs. Notable is come to wait upon your ladyship.

L. Wrong. Here, come in the next room, friend, I must employ you farther. Desire her to walk in, I'll wait upon her presently. [*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter Mrs. HARTSHORN with Miss NOTABLE.

Mrs. Harts. If your ladyship pleases to walk in, my lady knows you are here, madam. Dear, madam, how extremely your ladyship's grown within this half year!

Miss Not. O, fie, Mrs. Hartshorn, you don't think me taller, do you?

Mrs. Harts. O, dear madam, to an infinity. "Nay, and "so plump too, so fresh looked, so roundhipped, and full-chested—that"—I'm sure, madam, he, he! If I were a young gentleman of quality, madam, he!—Your ladyship will pardon my freedom—I protest, he, he!—

[*Curtseying and simpering.*]

Miss Not. I vow, Mrs. Hartshorn, you have a great deal of good humour; is not your lady very fond of you?

Mrs. Harts. Truly, madam, I have no reason to complain of my lady; but you must know, madam, of late there have been some concerns in the family between my lord and she, that I vow, my poor lady is seldom in humour with any body.

Miss Not. I'm mighty sorry for that.—What, does my lord give her any occasion for jealousy, think you?

Mrs. Harts. Occasion, quoth'a! O, lard! madam—But it is not fit for me to speak.

Miss Not. [*Aside.*] I'm glad to hear this—'Tis possible

her ladyship may be convinced that fifteen is as fit an age for love, as six and twenty. And if her jealousy's kindled already, I'll blow it into a blaze before I part with her.

Mrs. *Harts*. Madam, I hear my lady's coming. I humbly take my leave of your ladyship: your ladyship's most obedient servant. [*Impertinently cringing.*]

Miss *Not*. Your servant, good Mrs. Hartshorn; if you'll call to see me, I have a very pretty new cross, that would become your neck extremely.—You'll pardon me.

Mrs. *Harts*. Dear madam, your ladyship is so obliging—I shall take an opportunity to thank your ladyship— [*Exit.*]

Enter Lady WRONGLOVE.

Miss *Not*. My dear, dear Lady Wronglove! you'll forgive me; I always come unseasonably, but now 'tis pure friendship, and my concern for you that brought me.

L. *Wrong*. My dear, you know I am always glad to see you—but you'll excuse me, if I am not the company I would be; I am mightily out of spirits of late. I hope Sir Friendly's well.

Miss *Not*. After the old rate, past the pleasures of life himself, and always snarling at us that are just come into them. I do make such work with him——He reads me every morning a lecture against lightness, and gadding abroad, as he calls it; then do I teize him to death, and threaten him, if he won't let me do what I please, I'll choose a new guardian that will.

L. *Wrong*. Come, do n't disoblige him, my dear: for if you'll let me speak as a friend, you have a good natural town-wit, I own, and a great many pretty qualities; but, take my word, your interest and reputation will find a better account in trusting them under your uncle's conduct, than your own.

Miss *Not*. I don't know that; for all this tedious self-denying course of philosophy is only to make me a good old woman: just the condition of the miser's horse—when he had taught him to live upon one oat a day, the poor creature died. So I am to spend all my youth in learning to avoid pleasures; that nature won't let me be able to taste when I am old—which is just as much as to say, don't drink while you are thirsty, because if you stay while you are choked, you won't care whether you drink or no.

L. *Wrong*. What an improving age is this! [*Aside.*] But, my dear, pray let me talk to you a little seriously, and I hope it won't be lost upon you; for you have an understanding that's uncommon at your age. I have observed, among all the unfortunate of our sex, more women have been undone by their wit than their simplicity: wit makes us vain, and when we are warm in the opinion of it, it sometimes hurries us through the very bounds of prudence, interest, and reputation; have a care of being singled out by the men. Women, like deer, are safest in the herd; she that breaks away from her acquaintance, may be most followed indeed; but the end of the chace is very often fatal.

Miss *Not*. But pray, madam, now with submission, I think your argument won't hold; for a deer's business is to escape, but a woman's is to be caught, or else the world's strangely altered.

L. *Wrong*. Honourably, I grant you.

Miss *Not*. Honourably! That is to stand still like a poor dumb thing, and be tamely shot out of the herd. Now I think a young creature, that fairly trusts to her heels, and leads you twenty or thirty couple of brisk young fellows after her, helter-skelter, over hills, hedges, bogs, and ditches, has ten times a fairer chance for her life; and if she is taken at last, I will hold twenty to one, among any people of taste, they'll say she's better meat by half.

L. Wrong. Well said, child! Upon my word you have a good heart: the address of a lover uses to be more terrible at your age. You seem to have resolved upon not dying a maid already.

Miss Not. Between you and I, Lady Wronglove, I have been positive in that this twelvemonth.

L. Wrong. Why then, since we are upon secrets, my dear, I must tell you, the road you are in is quite out of the way to be married: husbands and lovers are not caught with the same bait.

Miss Not. With all my heart; let me but catch lovers plenty, I'm satisfied: for if having one's will is the pleasure of life, I'm sure catching a husband is catching a Tartar. No, give me dear, precious liberty—content, and a cottage.

L. Wrong. And would not a good husband content you?

Miss Not. And why must I expect a better than any of my neighbours? Do but look into the private comforts of the dear, fond, honourable couples about this town; and you'll find there's generally two beds, two purses, two tables, two coaches, two ways—And so in most of their pleasures an unmolested separation is the only chain that keeps them together. Now pray, madam, will you give me leave to be free, and ask you one question?

L. Wrong. Freely, my dear.

Miss Not. Then did you yourself, never, upon no occasion, repent your being married?

L. Wrong. That question's very particular, my dear.

Miss Not. Perhaps you'll pardon me, when I give you my reasons for asking; but if you never did repent it, I am resolved I won't be the first that shews you occasion to do it.

L. Wrong. I don't know, my dear, that ever I gave any body reason to think me uneasy at home; but you speak, child, as if you knew something that ought to make me so.

Miss *Not*. Then, depend upon't, unless I were sure you were uneasy already, I'd as soon be locked up as tell you any thing.

L. *Wrong*. Well, suppose I am uneasy.

Miss *Not*. Pardon—I can't suppose it—But suppose you are not, then I should play a fool's part, I'm sure, to make you so.

L. *Wrong*. I am sure you know something of my lord; pray tell me.

Miss *Not*. Since I see you are uneasy, and I know you love but too well; upon condition you'll think I only do it to help your cure, I will tell you: for when a woman is once sure she has a substantial reason to hate her husband, I should think the business must be half over.

L. *Wrong*. You make me impatient.

Miss *Not*. Let me think a little to soften it, as well as I can. What great fools these wise over-grown prudes are, to tell the greatest secret of her life to a girl? To own her husband false, and all her sober charms neglected—But if she knew that young Pill Garlick were the occasion of it too. Lard! how her blood would rise! What a disfigurable condition would my poor head-clothes be in? [*Aside.*] Well, madam, to begin then with the end of my story; in one word, my lord is grossly false to you, and to my knowledge has an appointment from a mistress this very afternoon, to meet her in a hackney-coach in the road to Chelsea.

L. *Wrong*. All this, my dear, except their place of meeting, I knew before; but how you come to know it, I confess, amazes me.

Miss *Not*. Look you, madam, all I know is this—While my Lord Wronglove and Lord George stayed at our house to speak with my Lady Gentle this morning, I happened to sit in the next room to them, reading the last new play:

where, among the rest of their precious discourse, I overheard my Lord Wronglove tell Lord George, the very appointment, word for word, as I have told it you.

L. Wrong. You did not hear her name?

Miss Not. No, nor what she was: only that she 's pretty and young; for I remember Lord George ridiculed his fancy, and called her green fruit. Little, if you please, says t' other, but riper I'll warrant her: and I had rather gather my fruit myself, than have it, like you, through the several hands that bring it to Covent Garden.

L. Wrong. The brutal thought!

Miss Not. When my lady came down, she made them stay to dinner; which was no sooner done, but I immediately slipped away to tell you of it: for methought I was as much touched with the wrong done to your ladyship, as if it had been to myself.

L. Wrong. My dear, I am extremely obliged to you.

Miss Not. I'm sure I meant well—For to know the worst is not half so bad as to mistrust it.

L. Wrong. Infinitely obliged to you.

Miss Not. Oh! she's deliciously uneasy. [*Aside, and pleased.*] I'll tell you what I would advise your ladyship to do: call for your hood and scarf, and an hackney-coach to the door this minute—In the mean time I'll step home again (for I am sure they are not gone yet, the tea was but just called for when I came away) and the moment my Lord Wronglove takes his leave, I'll send you word: then you may clap on your mask, drive after him, and in five minutes, I'll lay my life, you catch them together.

L. Wrong. Why then, if you'll do me the favour to send me that word, my dear, I shall have leisure in the mean time, perhaps to improve upon your advice.

Miss Not. If you'll let one of your people send my servant for a chair, I'll go this minute.

L. *Wrong*. Here——Who's there?

[Mrs. Hartshorn *at the door*.

Miss *Not*. Now I think I shall be even with his honour, I'll teach him to tell of favours before he has them at least: If I had not discovered him, in my conscience he had let madam discover me.

[*Aside*.

L. *Wrong*. I would not but have known this for the world.

Miss *Not*. I am over-joyed I can serve your ladyship: you'll excuse my running away.

Enter Mrs. HARTSHORN.

Mrs. *Harts*. Here's a chair, madam,

Miss *Not*. Well, I'll take no leave, for I'll call again by and by, to know your success. Your servant. [*Runs off*.

L. *Wrong*. Get me a hood and scarf, and a mask, and bid one of the footmen call an hackney-coach to the door immediately. [*Ex. Mrs. H.*] "What will become of me? Should not I strive to hate him? I think I almost do. Is he not contemptible? Fogh! What odious thing must this be, that he converses with? A woman without modesty has something sure of horror in her nature! What is it then in men, that overlooks so foul a coarseness in the heart, and makes them infamously fond of shame and outside? I blush to think on't." How tame must he suppose me, if I bear this usage? I'll let him see I have a spirit daring as his own, and as resentful too. "Since he dares be base I cannot bear but he should see I know him so." To sigh in secret o'er my wrongs, and pay his falsehood the regards I only owe his truth, is more than nature can submit to.

"When once the nuptial bond's by him destroy'd,

"The obligations of the wife are void.

[*Exit*.

SCENE II.

Changes to Lady Gentle's House. Lady GENTLE, Lord WRONGLOVE, and Lord GEORGE, at a Tea-table.

L. *Gent.* [*To Lord Wronglove.*] Come, come, my lord, you must stay another dish, indeed.

L. *Wrong.* Upon my faith, madam, my business is of the last concern; your ladyship knows I do n't use to start from good company.

L. *Gent.* Well, I e'en give you over, you grow perfectly good for nothing.

Lord *W.* The truth on't is, madam, we fond husbands are fit for nothing—but our wives.

L. *Gent.* Come, none of your raillery upon one that's too good for you.

Lord *W.* Why, she has some high qualities, indeed, madam, that I confess are far above my merit; but I'm endeavouring every day to deserve them, as fast as I can.

L. *Gent.* Go on, you deserve nothing at all, now you disoblige me.

Lord *W.* I shall take a better opportunity to make myself amends for going so soon; I am your ladyship's most humble servant. Mrs. Conquest, pray, take care of Lord George.

Mrs. *Con.* O, he shall want for nothing, my lord; pray do you take the same care of the lady you are going to.

Lord *W.* Ha, ha, ha! [*Exit.*]

Lord *G.* My Lord Wronglove is a very pretty gentleman, and yet how unaccountable 't is to hear good sense jest upon marriage!

L. *Gent.* My lord has so much good sense, that he does not mean what he says, I dare swear for him.

Lord G. Indeed, madam, I can't think he does: I never saw any thing amiss in his actions, either at home or abroad.

L. Gent. Nor I, indeed: and I think your lordship very much to be commended; you love to put the fairest construction upon things; 'tis a certain sign of good sense, and good principles.

Lord G. Your ladyship has so much of both, that I can't help being proud of any thing that recommends me to your esteem.

L. Gent. Upon my word, my lord, you have a great share on't, and I think very deservedly; 'tis not a common thing in this town, to find a gentleman of your figure, that has courage enough to keep marriage in countenance, especially when 'tis so much the mode to be severe upon't.

Lord G. Now that to me is an intolerable vanity, to see a man ashamed of being honourably happy, because 'tis the fashion to be viciously wretched. I don't know how it may be with other people, but if I were married, I should as much tremble to speak lightly of my wife, as my religion.

Mrs. Con. O! the hypocritical monster! When he knows I know, if he were to be hanged, he'd scarce think it a reprieve to be married. [*Aside.*] "There's roguery at the bottom of all this, I'm sure—The devil does not use to turn saint for nothing."

L. Gent. I am in hopes your ladyship's good opinion of marriage will persuade you not to be long out of it: we that feel the happiness of a condition ourselves, naturally wish our friends in it.

Mrs. Con. What do you think of me, my lord, you know I have been about you a great while?

Lord G. Fy, fy! you marry! A mere rake!

Mrs. Con. O, but I fancy now, a man of your sobriety and stayed temper, would soon reform me.

Lord G. This subtle devil "smoaks me!"—We are mortals, faith—It shews her a little jealous however. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Con. I'll be whipped if ever you marry more to your mind; what signifies two or three thousand pounds in one's fortune, where you are sure it would be made up in good humour and obedience.

Lord G. And considering how intimate a footing you and I have always conversed upon; what a venerable figure should I make in the solemn authority of a husband, pretending to command you.

L. Gent. O! if you were married, there would be but one will between you.

Lord G. There's the danger, madam: there being but one, we should certainly squabble, who should have it. I should like Mrs. Conquest, perhaps, for my wife's companion: one as a light allay to the softness of the other's temper: but if I were once fix'd in love, and should unfortunately bolt upon the least glimpse of jealousy, I am such a slave to tenderness, I know 't would break my heart.

"Mrs. Con. Now could I wash his face with my tea."

[*Aside.*

L. Gent. Well, I am confident my lord would make an extreme good husband.

Lord G. I don't know but I really might, madam, if I could persuade any woman besides your ladyship to think so.

Mrs. Con. How artfully the monster screws himself into her good opinion; I must take him down a little. [*Aside.*] Pray, my lord, how many women have you had of late, by way of balm, to heal the slight wound I gave you?

Lord G. Upon my faith, madam, I had my wound and cure from the same person: my passion for you went forward like Penelope's web; whatever your eyes did in the day, a very short reflection upon your temper unravell'd at night;

so that if you will needs know the truth, I have not been reduc'd of late to apply myself for relief to any body but your ladyship—Ha! ha! ha! ha! [*Affects an insulting laugh.*]

Mrs. Con. Well, he has a glorious assurance!

Lord G. I fancy, Mrs. Conquest, you measure my principles by your own; for by your question you seem to think me a very wild creature.

Mrs. Con. O fy, my lord! so far from it, that I never saw any thing so astonishingly modest.

Lord G. Not so modest, neither, madam; but if my Lady Gentle will give me leave, I dare use you most intolerably for this.

L. Gent. Ev'n as you please, my lord; for I confess her assurance is enough to dash any one out of countenance.

Lord G. Does your ladyship hear that, madam? Remember, now, that I am allowed the modester person; but to let you see, that in a just cause I scorn to take the advantage of my character, I'll lay it aside for once, and with an honest freedom tell you, your attempts upon me are vain: you are homely, downright homely; and if she were not akin to me, I would as soon marry my grandmother.

Mrs. Con. Ah, poor soul every body knows as well as myself, I am more than tolerably handsome: and (which you are ready to tear your flesh at) the whole town knows you think so.

Lord G. Madam—did your ladyship ever hear so transcendant an assurance?

L. Gent. Nay, I'm on your side, my lord—I think you can't be too free with her.

Lord G. I'll tell your ladyship what this creature did once; such an instance of her intrepid self-sufficiency—

L. Gent. Pray let's hear it. Ha! ha!

Mrs. Con. With all my heart, I'll be heard too.

Lord G. I'll tell you, madam—About two years ago, I happened to make a country visit to my Lady Conquest, her mother, and one day at table, I remember, I was particularly pleas'd with the entertainment, and upon enquiry found that the bill of fare was under the direction of Mademoiselle here: now it happened at that time, I was myself in want of a housekeeper; upon which account I thought it would not be amiss, if I now and then paid her a little particular civility: to be short I fairly told her, I had a great mind to have a plain good housewife about me, and dropt some broad hints, that the place might be her's for asking—Would you believe it, madam, if I'm alive, the creature grew so vain upon't, so deplorably mistook my meaning, that she told me her fortune depended upon her mother's will, and therefore she could receive no proposals of marriage without her consent: ha, ha! Now, after that unfortunate blunder of her's, whether I ever gave my lady the least trouble about the business, I leave to the small remainder of her own conscience.

Mrs. Con. Madam, as I hope to be married, the poor wretch fell downright in love with me! for, though he designed only to make two days stay with us, it was above three months before I was able to get rid of him. When he came first indeed, he was a pretty sort of a tolerable impudent young fellow; but before he left us, O! the power of beauty! I most barbarously reduced him to a sighing, humble, downright dulness and modesty.

L. Gent. Ha, ha!—Pray which of you two am I to believe all this while?

Lord G. Madam, if there's any faith in my senses, her only charms then were, and are still, not in raising of passion, but paste. I own I did voraciously admire her prodigious knack of making cheese-cakes, tarts, custards, and syllabubs; ha, ha, ha!

L. Gent. Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Con. You see, madam, what 'tis to let him be ever so little out of one's hands: now his very modesty is impudence; for, to deny his being in love with me to another, is ten times more insolent than his first owning it to me.

L. Gent. Pshah, words signify nothing—Did he ever own it under his hand?

Mrs. Con. His hand!—Ha, ha, ha! madam—as I am a living creature, if I have one I have five hundred billet-doux of his, where he has confessed such things of my wit and parts, and my eyes, and my air, and my shape, and my charms, that—Nay, he tells me in one I have more natural beauties the moment I rise out of my bed in the morning, than the whole drawing-room upon a birth-day by candle-light. There's for you.

Lord G. And she believ'd it, madam—"Ha, ha, ha! that's well enough." There's for you, ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Con. Why, I believe still you think so—Then "every line of them is so cramm'd with sincerity, sighs, hopes, fears, flames, darts, pains, pangs, and passion, that in my conscience, if a body were to set them on fire, the flame would never go out."

L. Gent. Well, if you are in love, ho, this is certainly the newest way of wooing that ever was.

Lord G. Whether I am in love or no, I leave to your ladyship.

Mrs. Con. And if your ladyship should give it against him, whether or no I have reason to be vain upon't, let the world judge.

L. Gent. The world, I believe, will think better of you both when you are married.

Lord G. In the mean time, I believe our surest comfort will be to think well of ourselves, and let it alone. [*All rise.*]

Mrs. Con. I am glad to find you have modesty enough to suppose marriage would make us think worse of one another.

Lord G. O, fye, Mrs. Conquest! the more you are known, the more you must be liked. *[Affectedly.]*

Mrs. Con. Is it then possible that you could like me? *[Affectedly.]*

L. Gent. Ha, ha! *[Going to the tea-table.]*

Lord G. If it were possible I could like any thing out of matrimony it would be you.

Mrs. Con. Well, but tell me, do you like me as I am?—How do you know but you may persuade me into it?

Lord G. Like you—Umph! “I can’t tell—Let’s see”——*[Looking on her.]*—Give me your hand.

“Mrs. Con. There——” *[Strikes it into his.]*

“Lord G. Now I must press it gently, to know if touching you keeps any correspondence with my heart—Humh!

“——A well flesh’d hand indeed! *[Ogling her.]*

“Mrs. Con. O lud! not so hard though.

“Lord G. Now try your other forces—look upon me.

“Mrs. Con. There——” *[Staring wildly on him.]*

“Lord G. *[Aside.]* She dares not, though in raillery, look kindly on me—I like her for’t—This over acted boldness to save her modesty at this time, looks like secret inclination.

“Mrs. Con. Well, how do you find yourself?—Have I power?—Do you burn much?

“Lord G. Umph!—No: I’m a little too low for a fever—There’s a small pulse indeed—Different sexes, like steel and flint, can’t well meet without a sort of striking light between them; not but it goes out as fast as it comes in—One farther trial of your power, and I’ll tell you more.

"Mrs. Con. Come, come, what is 't? I'll do't."

"Lord G. Turn away your face; hold your hand before it: now draw your hand slowly from me, and, if you would not have me think this lightness of your humour a direct indifference, let me perceive a gentle hold at parting, as though you left a tender heart upon the pressure."
[*She does as directed, and runs from him.*]

"Mrs. Con. Has your ladyship any tea left?"

Lord G. Death! that softening touch has shot me to the soul.

"Mrs. Con. Let me observe him well, for faith I try'd my utmost force, and even pleas'd myself in hopes to touch him."
[*Aside.*]

"Lord G. [*Aside.*] How vain a coxcomb am I! This girl has fool'd me to believe she likes me—That there should be such pleasure in the flattery of another's good opinion!—There's something in the open freedom of her humour, so much beyond the close reserve of formal prudery, that—death! if she were of any price but marriage—But I am a fool to think of her."
[*Walks apart.*]

"Mrs. Con. Humh! the symptoms are right—hah—
"Courage, *ma fille*, the gentleman has a hole in his heart yet."

Enter a Servant, who gives Lord George a letter.

Lord G. Oh! there, come in good time—Now to drive out one poison with another—[*Goes to Lady Gentle.*] Madam, if your ladyship's at leisure—I have the bills ready.

L. Gent. I am ashamed to give your lordship this trouble.

Lord G. A trifle, madam, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, if your ladyship pleases to look upon 'em, I think they are all hundred pounds. The rest I have about me in gold.

L. Gent. If your lordship pleases, we'll reckon in the next room—Mrs. Conquest.

Mrs. Con. I'll wait upon your ladyship.

[*Exeunt Lady Gentle and Lord George.*]

—Eight hundred pounds, and the rest in gold, upon her bare word of honour! He'd hardly make that compliment, only to give me jealousy—The mortal's in earnest, that's certain—and what wicked way he proposes to find his account with her I am afraid to think—Let me see, I know there will be deep play here to-night; I have a thought in my head, that perhaps may lay a block in his way to her—Not but if there is such a thing as impregnable virtue, I dare swear my Lady Gentle is mistress of it; but then, on the other side, he has a consummate assurance, that's full as unsurmountable. “And when the impudent hopes of a lover are like his, covered with modesty, it alters the case—strangely—No woman can then be positive what will become of her. Her not suspecting his design puts him but in a fairer way of carrying it on—Ah, lud! I don't like it. He'll certainly—Well, let him do what he will, he can't marry her, that's one comfort, however.” [*Exit.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

Lord Wronglove's House. Enter Miss NOTABLE alone.

Miss Notable.

So! this has been a day of business—I think now I am pretty even with his lordship; and if I could but draw in Lord George to be his rival now, I should touch the very tip of happiness—For then to have the noise of these two lovers draw two or three score more after me, which it cer-

tainly would: for when once a woman's the fashion, every body follows her; she fills like a music subscription, though there's nothing in't, nobody will be out on't—And then to have the full pleasure of mortifying Mrs. Conquest too, that's always holding her nose over me, as if I was not fit to be out of my bib and apron. If I don't make as good a rout in the town as she, 'tis very hard—sure!—I'll forbid 'em all to toast her, that's positive.

Enter Lord GEORGE.

Lord G. [*Aside.*] Here she is, faith, and alone: now if I can but flatter her into my party, my business is half over—So! my little Venus!

Miss Not. Bless me—This is lucky—I vow, my lord, you frighten me.

Lord G. Well, and what makes your pretty ladyship here, now none of the family's at home?

Miss Not. O! my lady will be at home presently!—but pray how came your lordship here then?

Lord G. Why, my life, I chanc'd to be driving by, and perhaps saw you go in. [*Takes her by the hand.*]

Miss Not. Well, and what then?

Lord G. Why then, upon enquiry, I found you were here alone, and that made me come in—My dear Miss! how charming you look to-day!

Miss Not. Pshah!

Lord G. What's the matter, my soul?

Miss Not. To tell me I look charming, and then call one Miss.

Lord G. O! I ask a thousand pardons,

Miss Not. No, dear Lord George, never call me Miss again, you don't call Mrs. Conquest so; and though she's bigger, and more out of shape, you know, than I, I'm

sure I'm as much a woman in my heart as she; nay, and in my passions too: for I could kill any woman that would rob me of a lover, and die for the dear man that would not be won from me.

Lord G. O, the pretty tenderness! But, my dear, take heed how you look upon me, for I am fam'd for assurance; and if once encourag'd, " 'egad my hope sets no bounds to " it's impudence, but falls downright to resolving, and " cocks its hat to the fair one's face, though in the very " fury of her virtue.

" Miss Not. I fancy now you are as gentle as the rest of " your brother beaux, whose greatest assurance is only of " bragging of more than you have.

" Lord G. Nay, if you doubt my virtues, child, I'll give " you a taste of 'em, my dear. [*Kisses her.*]

" Miss Not. Hold! hold! O lud! The deuce take you " for me.

" Lord G. Death! what a pouting lip the rogue has! " 'egad I think my friend Wronglove's in the right on't, " sure.

" Miss Not. Besides, do you think this bullying is any " proof of your courage? [*Affectedly grave.*]

" Lord G. Why then, my dear, to prevent all mistakes " for the future, I now give you fair warning—If you have " a mind I should not like you, don't flatter me any more; " for I tell you, I'm a downright believing puppy, and " upon the least hint of a hope, can no more forbear pro- " ceeding."——

Miss Not. Look you, my lord, all this is but stuff, for, upon my word, you'll find it no easy matter to flatter me: I know well enough how you're dispos'd of.

Lord G. Why then, by all the pains, pangs, and torments—In short, I'm a fool; I won't speak a word more to you.

Miss *Not.* Fy! fy! you had better give yourself these airs to Mrs. Conquest.

Lord G. I don't know but I had, madam; for I suppose you'll tell my Lord Wronglove of it.

Miss *Not.* Ah! poor soul! if Mrs. Conquest lik'd you no better than I do my Lord Wronglove, you'd think yourself a miserable creature.

Lord G. If Mrs. Conquest lik'd me but half so well as I like you, I am sure she'd be a miserable creature.

“Miss *Not.* Umh! how can you design upon me so?”

“Lord G. How can you think to impose upon me so?”

Miss *Not.* My lord, I shall take it very ill, if you tell me of my Lord Wronglove.

Lord G. Then perhaps, madam, I shan't take it well to be told of Mrs. Conquest,

Miss *Not.* My Lord Wronglove!

Lord G. Mrs. Conquest!

Miss *Not.* I'd have you know, my lord, of all mankind, he's the farthest from my thoughts.

Lord G. And I'd have you know, madam, of all woman-kind, Mrs. Conquest's as far out of mine.

Miss *Not.* Lard! the assurance of some men!

Lord G. Look you, madam, in short, I can prove what I say; and I hold ten pound of tea to a pinch of snuff, you won't let me prove it: come, and I'll take the same bet of you, that you don't prove to me, what you said to me of my Lord Wronglove.

Miss *Not.* Come, it's done!

Lord G. Done!

Miss *Not.* Done, for both!

Lord G. Done!

Miss *Not.* Why then, to prove that I am innocent of the least inclination for him, I own he has teaz'd me these two months; and because I was resolved to give him his answer

and his punishment at the same time, I this very afternoon made him an appointment—then went immediately and told my Lady Wronglove he was to meet a mistress at such an hour, to my knowledge, and so sent her in a fury after him to catch 'em together.

Lord G. But how could you escape yourself, all this while?

Miss *Not.* O! I did not tell her it was I; for as soon as I had blown up her jealousy, I whipt into a hackney coach, and got to my lord before her, where I just popp'd out my head to him, and told him, in a pretended fright, my lady had dogg'd him, and I durst not stay; then drove away as fast as I could, and e'en left her to make up accounts with him.

Lord G. Why then, my life, I do pronounce, that the stoutest wife of 'em all, with the spirit of revenge in her, could not have better bustled through this business than you have.

Miss *Not.* And to let you see, sir, that I never do design him any favour, I give you leave to tell him, that I sent my lady after him—Which if he does, I'm sure my Lord Wronglove must suspect an intimacy between us. [*Aside.*] Nay, and if you'll but stay a moment, you'll have an opportunity, for I know he'll be at home presently.

Lord G. Then you are but just come from him!

Miss *Not.* The minute you saw me come in. And now, sir, if you can but give me half as good a proof, that your heart is innocent of Mrs. Conquest—why 'tis possible, when you've been about seven years in the same mind, I may then begin to think whether I shall consider of it or no.

Lord G. A notable encouragement, truly! But to let you see, madam, I can't bear the scandal of a passion I'm not guilty of, as the last proof of my innocence, if either she

doubts of my indifference, or you of my inclination, I am content to own both before your faces.

Miss *Not*. And so afterwards deny both, behind both our backs. Indeed you must think again, that won't do—"An old bite."

Lord G. Come, I'll do more—I'll pretend to trust you with my passion for a third person, and give you leave, in the tenderest touches art or woman's wit can paint it, to tell it that third person, while Mrs. Conquest is by.

Miss *Not*. Umh! this has a face.

Lord G. Nay, with a mask upon't too; for while I am convincing you I don't care a button for her; I impose upon a third person, purely to make a secret of my passion for you.

Miss *Not*. Better still—But when I have a mind to pull off the mask, you shan't refuse to show your face—for I don't care a man should be ashamed of his passion neither.

Lord G. As you please for that.

Miss *Not*. I begin to like this strangely—This will teize Mrs. Conquest to death—But now the difficulty is to find out this third person—It must be one I'm acquainted with—What think you of my Lady Wronglove?

Lord G. Umh! No, I don't care to affront the wife of my friend.

Miss *Not*. Ah: do you think any of the sober souls about town are ever angry in their hearts to hear a man like 'em.

Lord G. That's true; 'tis possible her resentment might let a man die in his bed after it—But 'tis not worth one's while to quarrel with him, about a woman I don't like.

Miss *Not*. Nay, I would not run you into any hazard, unless 'twere upon my own account—And now I think on't I'll reserve that quarrel to myself.

[*Aside*.

Lord G. Come, I have found one—the properest person in

the world is my Lady Gentle——You know you are all in a house together; her husband Sir William's in the country, I have no acquaintance with him, and if I lose her's by her, I don't care six-pence.

Miss *Nor.* I like your choice very well; but I doubt it will require some art to manage her: for, to say the truth, the woman is most fantastically simple: the very word love out of any mouth but her husband's, will make her start as if a gun went off.

Lord G. Therefore, my dear, it must be done as if you did not do it: you must go to her in all the disorder in the world, as if I had the impudence to endeavour to bribe you into my assistance.

Miss *Nor.* Right; or I'll go first and quarrel with my uncle till he makes me cry, and then come in with my eyes swelled, and sobbing, as if I was almost choak'd with the affront you had offered me, and then call you a thousand villains for daring to propose such an impudent thing to me.

Lord G. Admirable!—'Egad, the child's a bar's length in experience above the stoutest of her sex——Hark! I hear a coach stop.

Miss *Nor.* Pshah! Deuce take him, 'tis certainly my lord! how shall we do?

Lord G. Why, if you'll give me leave, my life, I'll call at your house in an hour, and there we'll settle every point to a tittle.

Miss *Nor.* With all my heart; I won't stay for my lady; I'll go home now: but here comes my lord, you shall see first how I'll use him.

Lord G. Don't trouble yourself, my life, it will only give him a jealousy, and do us no service.

Miss *Nor.* Indeed! methinks if I am not afraid of his jealousy, you need not.

Lord G. My soul, I ask ten thousand pardons for my stupidity.

Enter Lord WRONGLOVE, and stops Miss NOTABLE, who seems to talk gravely with him.

Lord G. 'Egad, I can hardly believe my senses; if this girl's character were in a play, people that had not seen it would swear the notableness of her head were above nature.

Lord W. [*To Miss Notable.*] Did my Lord George tell you I had told him that you were to meet me?

Miss Not. That's no matter, it's sufficient, I know you told him: but I thought at least you had seen enough of the world to know, that a confidant was the safest disguise for a rival.

Lord W. I am sorry your ladyship has such an opinion of me.

Miss Not. Indeed, sir, I shall not reproach you; I have satisfied myself in serving you as you deserve for it—There's one can tell you how too, and so your servant—My lord, you'll remember. [*To Lord Geo.*] [*Exit Miss Not.*]

Lord W. Ha, ha, ha! Why, how now, friend!—What, are you my rival?

Lord G. Ha, ha, ha! Why, faith I am very near being one of them; for I believe the child will think she has hard luck, if the whole town is not so in a fortnight.

Lord W. But pr'ythee how came she to know I ever made you a confidant of my affair with her? I am afraid you have been thoughtless.

Lord G. No, by all that is honest—But she has told me more than you could tell me.

Lord W. What?

Lord G. That she herself told my Lady Wronglove of your appointment with her this afternoon, and (as I sup-

pose you have since found) sent her in a hackney coach after you.

Lord W. The devil!

Lord G. Nay, 'twas a home push, faith!

“ Lord W. Home, quotha! 'egad it's time for me to knock off, I shall never come up with her: but what could she propose by telling you of it?

“ Lord G. Why, a fresh-lover, I suppose—She found me a little tardy here in addressing her; and imagining my small virtue might proceed from a regard to you, to convince me of her indifference to you, she very fairly told me how she had served you, to open an easier passage in my conscience for my passion to her.

“ Lord W. Sir, I give you joy.

“ Lord G. And faith, sir, I expect it, though not as you do, from the green youth of her person, but the plump maturity of her understanding—in helping me to another.

“ Lord W. Riddles!

“ Lord G. To be short; I think I have bit the babe; for in return, to convince her of my indifference to Mrs. Conquest, I have imposed upon her to discover my real passion to Lady Gentle, before Mrs. Conquest's face; and this, sir, with your leave, is, upon my honour, all the use I design to make of her.

“ Lord W. Faith, it is a glorious one—All Machiavel was boys-play to it. Look you, sir, if you have a fancy to the small remainder of her composition—pray be free.

“ Lord G. Dear sir, not so much as the squeeze of her little finger: but I thought I might make bold with her virtue, and not rob your *gout* of a morsel.

“ Lord W. Not a step further, faith—I shall e'en turn about my nag and go home: a little humble hare-hunting, by way of taking the air, I can make a shift to come

"up to; but to scamper, neck or nothing, after a mad galloping jade of a hind, that will run you strait an end out of a country, requires a little more mettle than I am master of.

"Lord G. Come, come! you are sportsman enough to know, that as pride first humbles a coquette into the loosest encouragements to gain a man, so the same pride very often piques her into the granting the last favour rather than lose him."

Lord W. I am sorry I have made this rout about it, sir; I expect to have my wife shock me too.

Lord G. Oh! pray, how did you come off? Did my lady see you in the coach?

Lord W. I am not sure, faith; but whether she did or not, she sha'n't convince me she did.

Lord G. Where did you leave her?

Lord W. Why, as soon as the child told me from her coach, that my wife was in another behind me, I advised her to go off: then whipt up my wooden glasses, and stood cross the road, to prevent the nymph's being followed; when she was out of sight, I ordered the fellow to drive to town as fast as black and bay could lay legs to the ground: and having the fortune of better horses, I just got time enough to stop, and give a fellow a guinea to cut the braces of the coach that came after me; which, while I drove gently on, I saw him do; so e'en came away, and left her ladyship fairly overset in the middle of a swinging shower, at Hyde-Park-Corner.

Lord G. How shall she get home?

Lord W. Umh! She will have wit enough in her passion, I presume, to send for another coach; or, if not, it will be a very pretty cool walk over the Park for her.

Lord G. What an unfortunate creature is a jealous wife!

[Brush whispers Lord Wronglove, and Exit.]

Lord W. My wife's come home: now, if you have a curiosity, you shall see how I'll manage her.

Lord G. Pray, sir, don't let me be witness of your conjugal douceurs; but if you please, I'll step into the next room a little, for I have two or three words to write; I must appoint the Count to meet me at Lady Gentle's after the play.

Lord W. Do so then—Take this key, you'll find paper in the bureau.

Lord G. Quick, quick, I hear her—*Bon Voyage.*

[*Exit Lord George.*]

Enter Lady WRONGLOVE, as from the Street, in a Hood and Scarf, and her Petticoat pinned up

L. Wrong. So, sir, you have come home, I see.

Lord W. Yes, madam, and you have been abroad, I see; will you never give over making yourself ridiculous to the very servants? Was this a dress to go out in, or a condition for a woman of your quality to walk home in? Death! what must people take you for?—For shame!

L. Wrong. My lord, when a husband grows monstrous, a wife may well become ridiculous.

Lord W. Look you, madam, while your jealousy keeps within bounds, I shall take little notice of it: but when its idle extravagancies break upon my reputation, I shall resent it as I ought. You may think me an ill husband, if you please; but I won't have the world think so till I give them occasion.

L. Wrong. Insolent!

Lord W. I thought I had told you in the morning of a foolish letter that was brought by mistake to me instead of my servant: your not taking my word, methinks was not over-civil, madam: and your since dogging my servant instead of me, to the very place of appointment, was extremely obliging. The fellow has confessed to me, since he

came home, that in his fear to be seen, he got your coach overthrown in the middle of the highway, while you ridiculously pursued him : a mighty reputable figure you must make, while you were getting out of it, no doubt !

L. *Wrong*. Come, come, my lord I have not lost my senses yet—I followed you, and saw you in the coach, when the confident creature reached out to you from another, to tell you, I suppose, that I was just behind you. You may wrong me, but you can never blind me. [In a scornful smile.]

Lord *W*. Look you, madam, that manner in speaking shews too much transport, and—colour does not become your face.

L. *Wrong*. [Taking him up short.] Some people think it does now : all men are not of your opinion, “ my lord, my complexion may not please you, perhaps ; but I have “ known many a lover find an appetite only from a husband’s “ losing it.”

Lord *W*. I won’t suppose, madam, you’ll suffer any man to like you more than he ought to do.

L. *Wrong*. Oh, sir ! don’t you depend more upon my discretion than your own——“ We wives, as well as our “ husbands, love to have some idle body or other to flatter “ us into humour, when the time hangs upon our hands.

“ Lord *W*. You are pleasant, madam.”

L. *Wrong*. Marriage would be an unfortunate frolic, indeed, if a woman’s happiness were to die with her husband’s inclinations.

Lord *W*. Waggish, I protest.

L. *Wrong*. Oh, there’s nothing like a modish husband to refine the unbred virtue of a wife into all the pretty liberties in fashion.

“ Lord *W*. Good company, or let me die.

“ L. *Wrong*. I knew the day when my Lady Honeymoon “ would have blushed, almost in tears, at the alarm of a bare

“civil thing from any man but her husband; but from the
“well bred example of his conscience, she has now most un-
“dauntedly got the better of her own, and stands buff at
“the head of the mode, without the least tincture of virtue
“to put her out of countenance.”

Lord *W.* Why now, my dear——this is something; if
you'd but always treat me with good humour, you and I
should never dispute as long as we live.

L. *Wrong.* Monster!

Lord *W.* For, you know, I have often told you, that if
ever I should be weak enough to wrong you, a gentle com-
plaint and good words would work me to any thing: “when
“the pride of an insolent reproach would be but adding
“fuel to my folly, and make it flame the higher: but now
“I see that you are convinced that your suspicions were
“groundless, and that you are sensible, if they had not, de-
“fiance is utterly the wrong way to reform me: you shall
“find that all this tenderness and temper that you now treat
“me with, shall not be thrown away upon me.”

L. *Wrong.* Insolent! provoking devil!

Lord *W.* I am glad we are friends with all my heart; I
am, upon my soul, my dear.

L. *Wrong.* Villain!

Lord *W.* Oh, my dear! I had like to have forgot one
thing, and since we are now come to a right understanding,
I'll tell you: if ever you and I should happen to disagree,
I beg of you, for your own sake, never give me any hard
language; because there is no being certain, but in one of
my brutal fits, I may let you cry yourself half blind for it,
before I forgive you.

L. *Wrong.* Forgive me! I have a soul as much above the
fear of you, as are your injuries below my scorn——I laugh
at both.

Lord *W.* Ay, but, my life, I would not have you trust me; for if ever you should accuse me wrongfully, I know my foolish temper so well, that, in my conscience, in pure spite, I believe—I believe—I believe I should keep a mistress.

L. *Wrong.* My lord, this affectation won't redress my injuries; and however you deceive yourself, in your unquestioned power of doing wrong, you'll find there is a force of justice yet above your strength, a curb of law to check abandoned principles; nor am I yet so poor in interest or friends, "jealous of my wrongs, as of their own," but I may find a time and place to make your proud heart humble for this usage.

Lord *W.* Death and hell! dare to insult me with such another thought, these walls shall mark your bounds of liberty: this dismal house becomes your prison, debarred of light; and let me see that big-mouthed friend, or interest then, than can unlock a husband's power to keep you—When my wife talks warmly to me, she shall ask my leave first.

L. *Wrong.* Never—Such leave as you took to give me cause for 't, I take to tell you of it.

Lord *W.* "We are upon an equal foot: I won't have you "so familiar in your accusations." Be warned, and stir me not to use my power: you may sooner make me an ill husband than a tame one.

L. *Wrong.* So may you me a wife, my lord: and what is 't binds me more to bear an injury, than you? I have seen you laugh at passive obedience between a prince and people, and in the sense of nature, I can't see why 'tis not as ridiculous from a wife to an injurious husband.

Lord *W.* Their hazard is at least unequal: a people may be freed by struggling; but when a fettered wife

presumes, the insulted husband's sure to make her chain the shorter.

" *L. Wrong.* Her mind, at least, is more at liberty; the ease of giving shame for pain, stands yet in some degree of pleasure: the wretch that's basely killed, falls better satisfied to see his murderer bleed.

" *Lord W.* Nay, now I crave your mercy, madam, I find I mistook your grievance all this while—It seems then, to be refused the pleasure of reproaching, is what you can't bear—and when you are wronged, to lock up your tongue is the greatest cruelty your tyrant can impose upon you—If that be the hardship, pray be easy, when you please; in the name of thunder go on, spare no invectives, but open the spout of your eloquence, and see with what a calm connubial resignation, I will both hear and bow to the chastisement.

" *L. Wrong.* Poor helpless affectation! This shew of temper is as much dissembled as your innocence—I know, in spite of all your hardened thoughts, to hear your guilt confronted thus, must gall your soul; patients don't use to smile while their fresh wounds are probed, nor criminals to laugh under the smart of justice.

" *Lord W.* My life, you begin extremely well, and with abundance of fire, only give me leave to observe one thing to you, that as you draw towards an end, don't forget the principal thing you were going to say.

" *L. Wrong.* How poor! how low! how wretched is a guilty mind, that stands without a blush the shock of accusation!

" *Lord W.* Hold, madam, don't mistake me neither; for I allow you to accuse me of nothing, but of what we fine gentlemen think is next to nothing—a little gallantry.

" *L. Wrong.* Audacious! horrid wretch! and dare you own the fact?

" Lord *W.* Own it! no, no, if I were guilty, I would
 " not do that; but I give you leave to suppose me so, be-
 " cause, by what you say, I fancy it would ease your heart
 " to reproach me; though methinks—it's very hard that
 " demonstration won't convince you of my innocence.

" *L. Wrong.* Demonstration!

" Lord *W.* Demonstration! Ay, demonstration: for, if
 " I were guilty, pray who could better know it than myself?
 " and have not I told you with my own mouth it is no such
 " thing? Pray, what demonstration can be plainer?"

L. Wrong. I find you are resolved to stand it to the last;
 but since I know your guilt, I owe myself the justice to re-
 sent it. When the weak wife transgresses, the husband's
 blood has leave to boil; his fury's justified by honour! the
 wrong admits no measure of amends; his reputation bleeds,
 and only blood can staunch it. And I must tell you, sir,
 that in the scales of conscience, the husband's falsehood is an
 equal injury, and equal too you'll find the wife's resentment:
 " henceforth be sure you're private in your shame; for if
 " I trace you to another proof, expect as little mercy for the
 " wretch you doat on, as you yourself would shew to the
 " felonious lover.

" *My wrongs through her shall shoot you to the soul,*

" *You shall not find I am an injur'd fool.*"

[Exit.

Lord *W.* Well said, 'egad, if she could but love with
 half the fire she can hate, I would not desire to pass my time
 in better company—Not but between me and myself, our
 dear consorts have something of a hard time on't: we are a
 little apt to take more liberty than we give—but people
 in power don't care to part with it, whether it be lawful or
 no; " to bear her insolence is positively intolerable—What
 " shall I do with her? I know no way of making an honour-
 " able peace, better than sword in hand—E'en let her pride

"swell till it burst, and then 'tis possible she may hear
"reason."

Enter BRUSH.

Brush. Here's Sir Friendly Moral, my lord.

Lord *W.* Desire him to walk in [*Exit Brush.*] I hold
fifty pounds the old gentleman comes to school me about his
young kinswoman; if he does, I know he'll do it hand-
somely: for give him his due, with all the severity of prin-
ciples, he is as good humoured, and as well-bred, as if he
had no principles at all.

Enter BRUSH, with Sir FRIENDLY.

Sir *F.* My lord, I am your most humble servant.

Lord *W.* Sir Friendly! this is kind indeed! Chairs there.
—Well, how goes the gout, sir?

Sir *F.* In troth very untowardly; for I can hardly walk
with it—Will your lordship give me leave—

Lord *W.* To stand upon any thing but ceremony.

Enter Lord GEORGE, from the inner room.

Lord *G.* Nuncle, I am glad to see you.

Sir *F.* Hah! Monsieur Brilliant, and in a sober visit after
sun-set!

Lord *G.* Oh, dear sir, I am grown a fellow of the most
retired conversation in the world.

Sir *F.* Your reformation is not of a very long date, I
believe; "for, if I don't mistake, I saw you but yesterday
"at the Thatched-house, with a napkin upon your head,
"at the window, in a very hopeless company!

"Lord *G.* How! how, nuncle!—two men of title, and a
"foreign count—hopeless company!

"Sir *F.* Most deplorable!—Your count's a counter, and

“ only passes for what he is in his own country ; your men
“ of title are indeed no counterfeits, every body sees into
“ their worth, Sir Bubble Squander, and my Lord Lawless :
“ but the sparks I observed you with were Done-first, the
“ jockey, and Touchum, the gamester ; as infamous a
“ fellow as ever broke the head of a box-keeper.

“ Lord G. Psha ! People that play keep all company : but
“ to let you see I had my account in it, I had a mind to bite
“ Sir Bubble in a horse match, and so took these two fellows
“ with me to let him into the secret.

“ Sir F. A fine instance of our modish morals indeed !
“ To make one's conscience a bawd, to the dishonour of
“ biting a wretch of perhaps an hundred pounds ! What a
“ shame it is the world should not call it by its true name,
“ cheating—that men of honour might not be guilty of it !

“ Lord G. Oh, sir, the name I grant you would strangely
“ alter the case ; but people of rank and power, nuncle, are
“ wiser, and nick-name one another's infirmities.—Therefore
“ 't is your little cheat, you see, that's sent to Newgate ;
“ your great one's only turned out of place.

“ Sir F. Nay, 't is a comfortable world indeed, for knaves,
“ fools, fops, cowards, and sharpers.

“ Lord G. Right ! their quality and quantity keep them
“ in countenance.

“ Sir F. So that a man may be any one, or all of them,
“ and yet appear no monster in most of the public places
“ about town,

“ Lord W. But with submission, Sir Friendly, if I meet
“ with a man of figure, that talks agreeably over a glass, what
“ in the name of good-nature have I to do with his morals ?

“ Sir F. 'T is, in my opinion, as dishonest for a man of
“ quality to converse with a well bred rogue, as 't were un-
“ safe for a woman of reputation to make a companion of

" an agreeable strumpet. People's taste and principles are
 " very justly measured by their choice of acquaintance:
 " besides, a man of honour owes the discountenance of a
 " villian as a debt to his own dignity. How poor a spirit
 " must it shew in our people of fortune, to let fellows, who,
 " deserving hanging every other day in their lives, die at
 " last of sitting up in the best company?" But my Lord
 Wronglove, I am afraid I have a pardon to ask; the last
 time we three were together, did not the old fellow a little
 overshoot himself? I thought, when we parted, I had been
 freer in my advice than became me.

Lord *W.* So far from it, that your very manner of speaking
 makes your most severe reproofs an obligation.

" Sir *F.* Nay, I was only concerned for what I had said
 " to your lordship; as for this spark, I no more mind his
 " caprice, than I believe he does any thing I can say to him:
 " and yet the knave has something of good-humour in him
 " that makes me I can't help sometimes throwing away my
 " words upon him. But give me your hand; in troth, when
 " I was at your years I had my follies too.

" Lord *G.* Ay! Now you come to us, nuncle, and I hope
 " you'll have good nature enough, not to expect your friends
 " to be wiser than you were.

" Sir *F.* Perhaps I don't expect it, but in troth, if they
 " should be wiser—for my soul I can't see any harm it
 " would do them: and though I love with all my heart to
 " see spirit in a young fellow, yet a little prudence won't
 " poison him: and if a man that sets out into life, should
 " carry a little general esteem with him, as part of his equi-
 " page, he'd make never the worse figure at the end of his
 " journey.

" Lord *G.* We young fellows that ride post never mind
 " what figures we make.

“ Sir *F.* Come, come! let’s not contend for victory, but
“ truth—I love you both—and would have all that know
“ you do so too—Don’t think because you pass for men
“ of wit, and modish honour, that that’s all you owe to
“ your condition: fortune has given you titles to set your
“ actions in a fairer light, and nature understanding, to make
“ them not only just, but generous. Troth, it grieves me
“ to think you can abuse such happiness, and have no more
“ ambition, or regard to real honour, than the wretched
“ fine gentleman in most of our modern comedies!—Will you
“ forgive me—Upon my faith, I do n’t speak thus of you to
“ other people, nor would I now speak so to you, but to
“ prevent other people’s speaking thus of you to me.”

Lord *G.* Nuncle, depend upon’t, I’m always pleased to hear you.

“ Lord *W.* I take it kindly.”

Sir *F.* Then first to you, Lord George—What can you think the honest part of the world will say of you, when you have seduced the innocent inclinations of one of the best wives, from perhaps one of the best husbands in the world?—To be plain, I mean my Lady Gentle.—You see, my lord, with all your discretion, your design’s no secret.

Lord *G.* Upon my life, nuncle, if I were half the fellow you think me, I should be ashamed to look people in the face.

Sir *F.* Fie, fie! how useless is the force of understanding, when only age can give us virtue?

Lord *W.* Come, sir, you see he’s incorrigible, you’ll have better success with me, I hope; for to tell you the truth, I have few pleasures that you can call it virtue in me to part with.

Sir *F.* I am glad to hear it, my lord—I shall be as favourable as I can; but, since we are in search of truth, must freely tell you, the man that violates himself the sacred ho-

nours of his wife's chaste bed (I must be plain, my lord) ought at least to fear, as she's the frailer sex, the same from her; the injury to her strikes deeper than the head, often to the heart. And then her provocation is in nature greater; and injur'd minds think nothing is unjust that's natural. This ought to make a wise man tremble: for in the point of real honour, there's very little difference between being a cuckold, and deserving to be one. And to come a little closer to your lordship's case, to see so fine a woman as my Lady Wronglove, even in her flower of beauty, slighted for the unblown pleasures of a green-sick girl; besides the imprudent part, argues at best a thin and sickly appetite.

Lord W. Sir Friendly, I am almost ashamed to answer you. "Your reproach, indeed, has touched me," I mean for my attempts upon your young kinswoman; but because 't is not fit you should take my word after my owning so unfair an action, here's one can bear me witness, that not half an hour before you came in, I had resolved never to pursue her more.

Sir F. My lord, I came not to reproach you with a wrong to me, but to yourself: had the girl had no relation to me, I still had said the same; not but I now am doubly bound to thank you.

Lord G. And now, nuncle, I'll give you a piece of advice: dispose of the child as soon as you can; rather under match her than not at all. For, if you'll allow me to know any think of the mathematics, before she's five weeks older she will be totally unqualified for an ape-leader: this you may as positively depend upon, as that she is of the feminine gender.

Sir F. I am pretty well acquainted with the ripeness of her inclinations, and have provided for them, unless some

such spark as you (now my lord has laid them down) whips up the cudgels in the mean time.

Lord G. Not I, upon honour, "depend upon't; her person's quite out of my *gout*, nor have I any more concern about it, than I have to know who will be the next king of Poland, or who is the true original inventor of strops for razors."

Lord W. Sir Friendly, I own I have been no stranger in other places to the follies you have charged me with; yet I am so far inclined to part with them, that were it possible I could be my own way, and properly, reconciled to my wife, I would not wish a thought of happiness beyond it.

Sir F. My lord, I know her temper and her spirit.

Lord W. Oh, human patience can't bear it.

Sir F. I warrant you; a wise man will bear a greater weakness from a woman. And, since I find your good-nature is not wholly disoblighd, I could wish, for both your sakes, I had your lordship's secret leave to talk with her.

Lord W. Umph!—Could not it as well be done without my leave, Sir Friendly? I should not care to have her think I made advances——

Sir F. Oh! I am a friend to both, and will betray neither of you.

Enter BRUSH.

Brush. Sir, there's a gentleman come out of the city, and stays at your house to speak with you.

Sir F. I'll wait on him——My lord, will you excuse me?

Lord W. I could rather wish your business would, Sir Friendly.

Sir F. Upon my word, my lord, 't is urgent. This man brings me money. I am discharging myself of my guardianship to Mrs. Conquest, and my business is now to pay her in the last sum of her fortune.

Lord G. What's the sum total, nuncle, if a man should happen to set a price upon his liberty?

Sir F. Come, come, the liberties you value, my lord, are not worth keeping. An honest smile from the good-humour of that girl is worth all the sodden favours of your whole seraglio. Will four thousand pounds do any good, my lord?

Lord G. Look you, Sir Friendly, marriage is very honourable and wise, and—and—it—it—it's—it's an extreme fine thing, no doubt; but I am one of those frank-hearted fellows that had rather see my friends happy that way than myself—My lord, your servant—If you are going home, nuncle, I'll carry you, for I have business at your house too.

Lord W. Who's there?—Light out!—Lord George, is your new chariot at the door?

Lord G. Yes; and positively the prettiest that ever roll'd in the rear of six horses.

Lord W. I have a mind to look at it. [Exeunt.]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Lord Wronglove's House. Enter Lady WRONGLOVE and Mrs. HARTSHORN.

Lady Wronglove.

WAS Sir Friendly within?

Mrs. Harts. Yes, madam; he gives his humble service, and says he will certainly be at home at eight o'clock, and expects your ladyship's commands.

L. Wrong. Did the fellow give my service to my Lady Gentle too, and to Mrs. Conquest?

Mrs. *Harts*. He did not say any thing of it to me, madam.

L. *Wrong*. What blockhead is it you always find out to neglect my business?—Whom did you send?

Mrs. *Harts*. James, madam.

L. *Wrong*. Call him in; I find I must always give my orders myself.

Mrs. *Harts*. He's gone to the play to keep your ladyship's places.

L. *Wrong*. The play! Sure the people are all out of their senses!—Why, I shan't go to-day.

Mrs. *Harts*. He said, madam, your ladyship ordered him, right or wrong, to keep places every Saturday.

L. *Wrong*. Psha!

Mrs. *Harts*. I hope your ladyship is not angry with me, madam.

L. *Wrong*. No, pr'y thee, I don't know what I say.

Mrs. *Harts*. Ah, poor lady! [Aside.

L. *Wrong*. What is the play to-day?

Mrs. *Harts*. The—the—Husbands, something—the Careful Husband, I think, madam.

L. *Wrong*. The Careful!—the Careless Husband, you mean, sure, though I never saw it.

Mrs. *Harts*. Yes, yes, madam—it's that play that my Lady Wear-breeches hates so, that I saw once, madam; where there's a lady comes in and catches her husband fast asleep with her own woman, and then takes her handkerchief off her neck, and then goes softly to him——

L. *Wrong*. And strangles him in his sleep?

Mrs. *Harts*. No, madam.

L. *Wrong*. Oh, strangles the woman?

Mrs. *Harts*. No, madam, she only lays it gently over his head, for fear he should catch cold, and so steals out of the room, without so much as offering to wake him.

L. *Wrong*. Horrid!—And what became of the poor-spirited creature?

Mrs. *Harts*. Oh, madam! when the gentleman wakes, and finds that his lady has been there, without taking any notice of it to him, he grows so sham'd of his wickedness, and so sensible of her virtues, that he afterwards proves the civillest gentleman, and the best husband in the world to her.

L. *Wrong*. Foh!—Were I an husband, a wife with such a tame, enduring spirit, would make me scorn her, or, at best, but sleep at her groveling virtue—Is my lord within?

Mrs. *Harts*. Yes, madam, he's reading in his closet.

L. *Wrong*. Any thing, the dullest solitude, more pleases him than my company—Hoh! [Sighing.]

Mrs. *Harts*. Ah, poor lady! it makes me weep to see her grieve at heart so. [Aside.]

L. *Wrong*. Go to my lord, and say I desire to speak with him. [Exit Hartshorn.]—Oh, for a draught of cold indifference, to chill this lukewarm love, that would rebel against my peace, that I may leave without a pang this hardened wretch, and to the rude riots of his gross desire give him up for ever!—He comes; keep down, my swelling heart, and let tame patience speak my wrongs for once; “for wrongs like mine need not the force nor fire of passion
“to present them.”

Enter Lord WRONGLOVE.

Lord *W*. I am told, madam, you desire to speak with me.

L. *Wrong*. Yes, my lord; and which, perhaps, you'll not dislike, to talk with you in temper, too, if you are in temper to receive it.

Lord *W*. While you're in temper, madam, I shall always think I owe you the respect of keeping mine; and when you are not, I shall keep it in respect to myself.

L. *Wrong*. My lord, I never had occasion to question your knowing what you ought to do; but you are not bound, you'll say, to make your inclination a slave to your understanding; "and therefore 'tis possible you won't want arguments to convince me that a wife's obliged to bear all faults in a husband that are not in her power to punish.

"Lord *W*. Proceed.

"L. *Wrong*. Now I must tell you, my lord, when any one injures me because 'tis in their power, I shall certainly hate them for't, because that's in my power.

"Lord *W*. I am sorry you think it worth your while to make use of so unprofitable a power.

"L. *Wrong*. I am sorry I have occasion for it.

"Lord *W*. Umh—that's half a question—But go on.

"L. *Wrong*." And therefore, since I find the more I endeavour to detect you, the more you persist in your resolution to use me ill; since my honest resentment, and your actions, have made us a mutual grievance to one another, I see no way in nature to make us mutually just, but by cancelling our obligations. If we agree to part, the uneasy bond of wife or husband no longer lies in force against us. And, since I am contented to remit the breaches you have made of the conditions on your part, I suppose you won't think it inconsistent with your reputation to allow me part of the fortune I brought you, as a separate maintenance.

Lord *W*. When you and I part, madam, you shall leave none of your fortune behind you. But should I now yield to your proposal, the world might think I owned the breaches you accuse me of, and then 'twere only parting to indulge your pride. But if the sincere sorrow of your humble heart can find a way to make it as consistent with my reputation as my private peace, I'll sign to your relief this moment.

L. *Wrong*. Your reputation! No, my lord, that's your business to secure; I've taken care to let my actions justify my own. If you have been remiss, the fault's not mine to answer. I am glad at least to see you own where it is your weakness lies.

Lord *W*. To bear such insults from a wife, is not perhaps my least weakness. Nay, I've another too, which I might own with equal blushing: a tame forgiving pity of your unfortunate temper, that pauses yet to take the advantage of your distraction to undo you.

L. *Wrong*. Horrid! Insolent assertion, to do me injury, and call my innocent endeavours at redress, distraction.

Lord *W*. Innocent! Away! "You take the rudest, fiercest, falsest means for reparation, if you had a wrong."

"L. *Wrong*. If I had! Insupportable! To be outfaced that my own eyes deceive me!

"Lord *W*." Death and confusion!—Suppose your wrongs were true—think what they are—speak 'em with a modest tongue, and blush at all this redness of resentment.

L. *Wrong*. Nay, now, my lord, we are past all argument.

"Lord *W*. 'T is fit we should be so. The subject ought to be below your thoughts. Don't misuse your pride, till I am taught to think you've none. Death! I've known the spirit of a strumpet in the misfortunes of her slighted love, shew more than you; who, though her heart was bleeding with the inward pain, yet to her lover's face took pride and ease to seem concernless at his falsehood."

"L. *Wrong*. My lord, your having a better opinion of such creatures than your wife, is no new thing to me: but I must tell you, I have not deserved your vile comparison, nor shall I ever buy an husband's inclination, by being like the horrid things you doat on."

Lord *W.* Come, since you are incorrigible, I'll give your pride the vain relief you ask for. "Your temper is at last intolerable, and now 't is mutual ease to part with you.—" Yet to let you see 't is not in the power of all your follies "to provoke me to an injustice, I will not trust your wishes "with your own discretion;" but if you have a friend that's not an enemy to me, whose honesty and sense you dare depend on, let him be umpire of the conditions of what's proper both of us should yield to when we part, and here's my hand, my word, my honour, I'll sign them on demand.

L. *Wrong.* Keep but your word in this, my lord, and I have henceforth no injuries to reproach you with.

Lord *W.* If in the least article I shrink from it, conclude me then the mean, the servile wretch, you'd make me.

L. *Wrong.* I'd make you just, my lord; if that's my fault, I never shall repent it.

Lord *W.* We are now no longer our own judges, madam, name the person you appeal to.

L. *Wrong.* Oh, my lord, you can't be more in haste than I am. Sir Friendly Moral; and I think you can have no objection to his integrity. I appeal to him.

Lord *W.* The man in the world I would have chose myself; and if you please, madam, I'll wait upon you to him immediately.

L. *Wrong.* No, my lord, I think it won't be unseasonable if I speak with him alone, first.

Lord *W.* With all my heart; in half an hour then I'll follow you.

L. *Wrong.* My lord, you need not affect this indifference; I have provocations enough without it—I'll go, depend on 't.

Lord *W.* I thought you had been gone, madam—[*She passes hastily by him.*] How now!

Enter BRUSH, who whispers Lord WRONGLOVE.

Brush. Sir Friendly Moral desires to speak with your lordship; he stays in the next room, and begs my lady may not know he's here.

L. Wrong. [*Turning.*] What can that whisper mean? But I have done with jealousy.

Lord W. When your lady's gone out, desire him to walk in. [*Exit Brush.*] In half an hour, as I told you, I'll positively be with you.

L. Wrong. Oh, my lord, I sha'n't stay to interrupt your privacies. [*Exit.*]

Lord W. How unfortunate must this woman's temper be, when even this affectation of indifference is the greatest proof I ever received of her inclination!—"What can this come to?—By Sir Friendly's being here, I fancy she has been disclosing her grievance already; and when she has made the very worst of it, I am mistaken if his temper and understanding won't convince her, that 'tis below the pride and prudence of a wife to take so violent a notice of it—But here he comes."

Enter Sir FRIENDLY MORAL.

Sir Friendly, your most humble servant. Come, we are alone, I guess your business—my wife has been talking with you.

Sir F. No, my lord; and unless you give me your word to be secret, I dare not tell my business.

Lord W. Upon my honour.

Sir F. Then there, my lord, I just now received that letter from her.

Lord W. [*Reads.*] 'At last I find there's no way of being easy in my life, but parting for ever with my lord; and I

would willingly do it in such a manner as might least blame me to the world. Your friendship to both our families will, I am sure, engage you to advise me in the safest method: therefore I beg you'll be at home some time this evening, that I may speak with you; for life, as it is, is insupportable. I am, sir, &c.'

Well, Sir Friendly, then I can tell you half your trouble is over; for we have agreed to part already, and both have chosen you umpire of the conditions.

Sir F. How, my lord! could passion be so far your master too.

Lord W. Why, faith, Sir Friendly, patience could endure it no longer. 'Twas her own proposal, and she found the way at last to provoke me to take her at her word.

Sir F. Her word! fie! fie! Because she'd lame her reputation to cripple yours, shall you revenge her folly on yourself? Come, come, your understanding ought to have more compassion for the misfortune of a weak woman's temper.

—“ Lord W. Oh, she's implacable!

“ Sir F. That quality punishes itself, my lord; and “ since the provocation's your's, it might sometimes be “ pardoned.” Do but imagine how it must gall the heart of a woman of spirit, to see the loose coquettes of her acquaintance smile at the modish husband's sleeping in a separate bed from her.

Lord W. Humph!—there's something in what you say, I own—not but you'll laugh at me, should I tell you the true and honest occasion of it.

Sir F. Not if it be true and honest, my lord.

Lord W. Upon my faith it was not the least distaste to her person, but her being downright an intolerable bed-fellow.

Sir F. How do you mean?

Lord W. I could never sleep with her. For though she hates late hours, yet when she has seen me gape for bed, like a waiter at the Groom-Porter's in a morning, she would still reserve to herself the tedious decorum of being first solicited for her company; so that she usually contrived to let me be three quarters asleep before she would do me the honour to disturb me. Then, besides this, I was seldom less than two nights in four, but in the very middle of my first comfortable nap, I was awakened with the alarm of tingle tingle, for a quarter of an hour together, that you'd swear she wanted a doctor or a midwife; and by-and-by down comes Mademoiselle, with a single under-petticoat in one hand, and rubbing her eyes with t'other; and then, after about half an hour's weighty arguments on both sides, poor Mademoiselle is guilty of not having pulled the sheet smooth at her feet, by which unpardonable neglect, her ladyship's little toe had lain at least two hours on the rack of a wrinkle, that had almost put her into a fever. This, when I civilly complained of, she said she must either be easy in bed, or go out of it. I told her that was exactly my case; so I very fairly stepped into the next room, where I have ever since slept most profoundly, without so much as once dreaming of her.

Sir F. An unfortunate circumstance, truly! But I see a little matter, my lord, will part people that don't care for company.

Lord W. But, Sir Friendly, (not to trouble you with a long particular of the provocations I had from her temper to run a roguing at first) suppose I have played the fool, is the fault unpardonable?—Is a wife's reputation, like an husband's, mean, or infamous, because she overlooks the folly?

Sir F. No. But did you, my lord, ever give her any signs of repentance?

Lord W. As far as I have thought the nature of the crime required. "I've often received her moderate reproaches with a smile and raillery; given her leave to guess, in hopes her understanding would have smiled again, and pardoned it."

Sir F. And what effect had that?

Lord W. Oh, none in nature!—"For, sir, her pride has possessed her with so horrid an idea of the crime, that my making slight on't but the more incenses her; and when once her passion takes the liberty of her tongue to me, I neither spare authority nor ill-nature to provoke or silence her. This, generally, is our course of conversation;" and for aught I see, if we should not agree upon parting, we are in as fair a way of heartily plaguing one another for life, as e'er a comfortable couple in Europe.

Sir F. My lord, the thought's too melancholy to jest upon.

Lord W. Why, faith, I have so far a concern for her, that could any means of an accommodation be found that were not unfit for a husband to submit to, I should not yet refuse to come into it.

Sir F. Spoken like a man, my lord!—How far the fault's in you I partly see: and when I have made the same enquiry into my lady's grief, I doubt not then I shall be better able to advise.

Lord W. You've now an opportunity, for she's gone this very minute to my Lady Gentle's, to speak with you.

Sir F. 'T were best to lose no time then, my lord: I'll take my leave—Nay, no ceremony—

Lord W. No, I'm going part of your way—upon my word.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Changes to Lady Gentle's House. Enter Lady GENTLE, reading a Letter, and Mrs. CONQUEST.

Mrs. Con. I hope Sir William's well, madam.

L. Gent. Yes, very well, my dear, and desires his *baisemains* to your ladyship.

Mrs. Con. Does he say any thing of coming to town?

L. Gent. No, nothing yet.

Mrs. Con. No!—Pray, madam, don't you think his good worship begins to be a little fonder of fox-hunting than you could wish he were?

L. Gent. I am always pleased while he's diverted—If you saw his letters to me, you would not think I had any reason to complain.

Mrs. Con. Nay, the world owns your ladyship has the perfect secret of making a good husband.

L. Gent. Believe me, child, the matter's not so difficult as people would have it. If you but knew what trifles in the compliance of a wife's temper sooth a man to fondness, you'd admire to what childish obstinacy so many women owe their uneasiness.

Enter Miss NOTABLE, crying.

Miss Not. Oh, oh!

L. Gent. How now, what's the matter, my dear?

Miss Not. Oh, oh! madam, madam!

Mrs. Con. Bless me! what ails the child?

Miss Not. I have been so abused, so affronted!

L. Gent. Abused!—By whom, my dear?

Miss Not. That monster of men, my Lord George Brilliant.

Mrs. Con. My Lord George!

Miss Not. Oh, I can't speak for passion!

L. Gent. I am amaz'd!—What has he done, child?

Miss Not. The most provoking, impudent thing that ever was offered to a young creature, sure.—Oh, oh!

Mrs. Con. [*Aside.*] This must be some strange thing, indeed; for if I don't mistake, her young ladyship thinks herself old enough for most sorts of impudence that a man can offer her.

L. Gent. Has he offered any love or rudeness to you?

Miss Not. Oh, worse, worse, a thousand times!

Mrs. Con. Worse!—What can that be, child?—Unless it be, that he has not made love to her. [*Aside.*]

Miss Not. Oh, madam! 't is not myself alone, but your ladyship and Mrs. Conquest too that are affronted.

Mrs. Con. Am I in? But it's no novelty to me—I have so far the better of both of you, I am used to his impudence, and know how to bear it.

L. Gent. I am amazed!—Pray let's hear, child.

Miss Not. Oh, I could tear his flesh for having such a thought of me!

L. Gent. What thought, my dear?

Miss Not. Oh, madam! could any thing but the greatest villain upon earth think to make me a procuress?

L. Gent. Child! you startle me!

Miss Not. Or any mortal, but from a most profligate principle of the most provoking vanity, nourish but the least living hope against your ladyship's virtue?

L. Gent. How, child!

Miss Not. Or any monster, but the most ungrateful, most audacious of mankind, propose too, that I should discover his odious inclinations to your ladyship, before the very face of one who innocently loves him? Oh, I am past patience!—I think I do it bravely.

[*Aside.*]

[*Walks about in disorder.*]

L. Gent. I'm all confusion!

Mrs. Con. If this girl's passion is not all an air, and her own contrivance, then will I be bound to endure the success of it.

L. Gent. His inclination! and to me! and yet proposed that you should discover it before Mrs. Conquest too! To glory in such insolence!—This seems a contradiction.

Miss Not. Or else, said he, 't will never be believed; for having the idle reputation of liking one, I am obliged that both should know it, that she I really love may see I'm wholly free from my former passion.

Mrs. Con. This lie must be his own, by the extremity of its impudence.

[Aside.

L. Gent. But when he used my name, child, why were you not shocked at first? Why did not you leave him to tell his idle story to the world?

Miss Not. Oh, madam! that was what betrayed me into hearing him: for when he first began he named no names; that he reserved till last, till he had told me all, to clinch the secret with.

L. Gent. But, pray, child, how did he begin it?—What was his manner first of attempting you?

Mrs. Con. Her ladyship grows a little inquisitive, methinks.

[Aside.

Miss Not. Oh, with all the subtle softness that ever humble love inspired!—Then, of a sudden, rousing from his fear, he gave himself such an animated air of confidence, “threw “back his wig,” and cried aloud,

Why should she asham'd or angry be,

To be below'd by me?

Mrs. Con. What do you think of his modesty now, madam?

L. Gent. I am amazed, indeed!

Miss *Not.* Then he turned to me, pressed me by the hand, and, kneeling, begged my friendship, and threw into my lap such untold heaps of gold, forced upon my finger too a sparkling diamond, I thought must beggar him to purchase. But when I heard him close his impudent story with offering me a letter to give your ladyship, while Mrs. Conquest was by, I started up, and told him, Yes, my lord, I'll do your errand, but without your letter, in another manner than your infamous principles have proposed it; my lady shall know your passion, but know it as I do, to avoid, to loath, and scorn you for such a villanous thought. While I was saying this, I threw his filthy gold upon the floor, his letter into the fire, his diamond out of the window, and left him to gather them up as he pleased, without expecting an answer.

L. *Gent.* Sure 't is impossible a man should wear a face that could so steadfastly belie his heart.

Miss *Not.* So I was resolved to tell your ladyship—Besides, I thought it proper Mrs. Conquest should know his brutality to her too.

Mrs. *Con.* Oh, I am mightily obliged to you, my dear; but I knew him before.

Miss *Not.* Ha! how affectedly indifferent the vain thing is! [Aside.]

L. *Gent.* My dear, I'm at a loss how far to doubt, or to believe this folly of him. Pray advise me. [To Mrs. Con.]

Mrs. *Con.* If your ladyship would take my opinion, I'd be entirely easy; I'd neither doubt or believe any thing of the matter, till I had it confirmed from his own behaviour.

Miss *Not.* I can't bear this. She sha'n't be so easy—I'll tell her the whole truth of his addressing to me, but I'll humble her. [Aside.]

L. *Gent.* Now, you know he was to be here with other company at cards to-night; but if you'll do me the favour

to sit with me, I'll keep my chamber, say I'm indisposed and see no company at all. What think you?

Mrs. Con. I think it won't be worth that trouble, madam.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, the company's come.

L. Gent. Is my Lord George there?

Serv. Yes, madam.

L. Gent. What shall we do now?

Mrs. Con. By all means go and receive him among the rest, as you used to do, and take no notice of any thing.—I'll wait upon your ladyship in two minutes.

L. Gent. If you don't I shall certainly betray myself; I'll come and fetch you. *[Exit.]*

Mrs. Con. As you please, madam.—I have observed a thoughtful smile upon this girl's face, that makes me fancy her secret is but half out yet. If I guess right I'll e'en pique her little pride till she tells me, for I know the chit does not care for me. *[Aside.]*

Miss Not. Oh! Mrs. Vanity's a little upon the humdrum at last, I see; I'll make her sob before I have done with her. *[Aside.]*—Mrs. Conquest, you seem a little concerned about this matter; now, if I were you, I'd take no manner of notice of it, he should not have the pride to think it was in her power to give me a moment's uneasiness.

Mrs. Con. My dear, you advise me very well; but upon my word I am not uneasy.

Miss Not. Pooh! that's such a jest! as if you did not love my Lord George.

Mrs. Con. Did he ever tell you I did?

Miss Not. Tell me!—No; but one sees that well enough.

Mrs. Con. Why then, if I do love him, child, you may

depend upon't, 'tis only from the assurances I have of his loving me only.

Miss *Not*. But since you see (as the world will too in a little time) how false these assurances are, had not you better seem to leave him, than lie under the scandal of his leaving you?

Mrs. *Con*. No, child; I'll still keep up my pretensions, if it be only to hinder other vain creatures from coming into hopes of him: for I know, were I once to own myself disengaged, then every impertinent coquet in town would be giving airs to him.

Miss *Not*. Was ever any thing so stupidly vain? [*Aside.*]
—Lard! madam, you have a mighty opinion of your perfections, sure, to think it impossible a man can be false to you: some women would ha' been a-top of the house by this time, if they had only heard of their lover's common civility to another. You are strangely happy, sure, when his owning a passion to your friend, before your face, can't make you uneasy;—heh! heh!

Mrs. *Con*. Methinks, child, my want of jealousy from what you've said, gives you a little uneasiness. I should be loth to think his idle way of raillery had taught you to think of love so soon.

Miss *Not*. So soon!—I suppose, madam, if I had the forwardness of your ladyship's inclination, I might produce as good proofs of his passion for me, as you can of his constancy to you.

Mrs. *Con*. So, she's stirred; I must have the rest on't. [*Aside.*—His passion to thee, love!—that were impossible. Have a passion for any thing so incapable to conceive it!—Why, love's a thing you won't be fit to think of these two years.

Miss *Not*. Not think of it! I'd have you know, madam,

there are men in the world that think me as fit for a lover as your ladyship.

Mrs. Con. So, now its coming.

[*Aside.*

Miss Not. And however unfit you think me, madam, I'd have you, next time any man's idle raillery flatters you into a passion for him, do n't let me know it—I say, do n't let me know it, for fear my unfitness should deceive your vanity, by taking him from you.—Not think of it! I shall live to see you burst with envy, madam. Do you observe me?—Burst! burst!—Not think of it!

Mrs. Con. Nay, now I am convinced. This passion, I dare swear, is real. He has certainly said some civil thing before he was aware—But for what you said of him just now to my Lady Gentle, my pretty one—

Miss Not. Pretty one!—Pray, madam—though I am sorry I can't say the same of your ladyship—

Mrs. Con. I say, all your late sobbing, and pretending to throw gold about the room, and diamonds out of the window, and all that stuff, my honey, I am now confirmed was all, from first to last, the pretty fiction of thy own little pride and jealousy, only to have the ease of giving me pain, from his supposed forsaking me.

Miss Not. Ha, ha, ha! I am glad to see your vanity so swelled, madam; but since I find 't is your disease, I'll be your friend for once, and work your cure by bursting it.—Know then you have guessed a truth that has undone you: the part I've acted of his pretended passion to another, was, as you said, indeed a fiction all, and only played to give my pride the diversion of his owning to your face how little he regards you. But know the fatal face to which you owe your ruin was not my Lady Gentle's, that was my own invention, but mine; not her, nor you, but me, and me alone he loves.—These poor unfit features have seduced him

from you. And now let all the world, that sees how barbarously your vanity, or mine, has mistaken idle raillery for love, judge who's most fit to think of it. [Exit.

Mrs. Con. Now the mystery's unfolded.—Oh! this subtle devil! how artfully has he fooled this forward girl to his assistance.—Well, there's something in the bare-faced excess of his assurance that makes me smile: I'm loth to say he's impudent, but he has an undaunted modesty, that's certain, and for that very one quality 't will be worth my while not to trust him even with my Lady Gentle.—Oh, Sir——

Enter Sir FRIENDLY MORAL.

Sir F. So, child, how stand affairs now? Any fresh discovery?

Mrs. Con. Only a trifling confirmation or two, sir, of what we suspected before. Therefore what we do must be done quickly. Have you considered what I proposed, sir?

Sir F. In troth, 't is a wild thought, but you have a wild spark to deal with, and for ought I know, his own snares may be likeliest to hold him. Only take this general caution with you, that the warmth of your understanding don't carry you into any action, that the discretion of your sex can't answer.

Mrs. Con. Fear not, sir, I know my man, and know myself.

Sir F. Then here's your letter writ, and sealed as you directed.

Mrs. Con. And here comes my lady; 't will be now a fit occasion to make use of it.

Sir F. I'll leave you then.

Mrs. Con. When I have done with her, sir, I would consult you farther.

Sir F. I'll expect you in my chamber.

[Exit.

Enter Lady GENTLE.

L. Gent. Oh, child, I'm glad I have found you.

Mrs. Con. What's the matter, madam?

L. Gent. I think I was never more provoked in my life.

Mrs. Con. Any thing from Lord George?

L. Gent. Yes—something that makes me shudder at the thought.

Mrs. Con. Bless me!

L. Gent. Something so grossly insolent in the over-respectfulness of his behaviour; such an affected awe when he but speaks to me; something that shews within his heart so vain, so arrogant a hope! it more provokes me than all the awkward follies of a bare-faced impudence: and since I find he secretly presumes upon my knowing his odious secret, 'twill be therefore but equal justice to myself and you, to crush his idle hopes at once; for, not to check, is to encourage them: and, when once a woman's known to be followed, let her virtue be never so famed, or fortified, the good-natured town always concludes the lover successful.

Mrs. Con. You did not seem to understand his behaviour?

L. Gent. I can't tell whether he understood me or no; but I could not help saying, in a very grave manner, that whatever strait I put myself too, his thousand pounds should certainly be paid him next week.

Mrs. Con. And how did he take it?

L. Gent. Oh! he is not to be put out of countenance, that I see, for he pressed me with a world of easy civility, not to give myself the least concern; for, if I pleased, he would immediately give me a very fair chance to pay him, without ever drawing a line for it.

Mrs. Con. A fair chance! What was it?

L. Gent. Why, he offered me indeed at picquet such odds,

as I am sure he is not able to give me; for Count Tailly, who stood by, thought it so considerable an advantage, that he begged he might go my halves, or what part of the money I pleased.

Mrs. Con. Well said, Count ——— This may come to something—She must play with him—for positively there's no other way of seeing a quick end to his hopes or mine. [Aside.

L. Gent. The extravagance of his offer, I confess, surprized me; so I only told him I'd consider on't, and came to you for advice.

Mrs. Con. Then certainly, madam, take him at his word; and since you know his dishonest end, in offering such an advantage, e'en make use on't, and let his very baseness punish itself.

L. Gent. As how?

Mrs. Con. Look you; the best way to disappoint his hopes is first to raise 'em. Go to him this minute, call for cards—and put on all the coquet airs imaginable: smile at his respect, and glance him out of his affected modesty. By this means you will certainly encourage his vanity, not only to the gallantry of letting you win your money again, but more than probable of losing his own to you.

L. Gent. I vow you tempt me strangely—I boggle at nothing but those airs you speak of, I shall do it so awkwardly—

Mrs. Con. Pooh! I warrant you—trust to nature; it's nothing; one cannot set one's hair in a glass without 'em. If it were not a sure card, you can't think I'd advise you to play it, for my own sake.

L. Gent. That, indeed, leaves me nothing to say. Well, upon your encouragement, I will venture, and the very moment I get home the sum I am out to him, I'll throw up my cards, and fairly tell him I know when 't is time to give over.

Mrs. Con. Admirable!

L. Gent. Nay, and because I don't think I owe him the regard of declaring it myself, I'll go down into Sussex to-morrow morning, and leave you, if you think fit, to tell him the occasion.

Mrs. Con. No, madam, to let your ladyship see I think every thing is entirely safe under your discretion, as my own, I am resolved to go out of town this moment.

L. Gent. What do you mean?

Mrs. Con. I have received a letter here from my brother Sir John, my twin-brother, madam, whom I have not seen these nine years; he arrived but last night from Italy, to take possession of his estate; he's now at his house in Essex, and a little indisposed after his voyage: he has sent his coach, and begs, if possible, I would be with him to-night.

L. Gent. To-night! impossible!—Go as early in the morning, child, as you please.

Mrs. Con. No, dear madam, pardon me, the moon shines, and I had rather defer my sleep than break it.

L. Gent. Well, my dear, since you won't be persuaded, I wish you a good journey. I shall see you before you go.

Mrs. Con. I have just a moment's business with Sir Friendly, and then I'll wait upon your ladyship. [Exit L. Gent.] Well, there she goes—how she will come off I can't tell. The good woman, I dare swear, is truly innocent in her intentions; but good looking after, I fancy, can do her no injury: for virtue, though she's of a noble spirit, and a great conqueror, 't is true; yet, as she's stout, alas! we know she's merciful, and when sly humility and nature kneel hopeless to her unquestioned power, they look so pitiful, speak in such a gentle tone, and sigh their griefs with such submission, that cruel virtue loses all its anger

for compassion——compassion kindles hope——hope arms assurance, and then——though virtue may have courage enough to give a stout knock with her heel, for somebody to come in——still, I say, if somebody should come in——it would be ungrateful in any woman alive not to allow, that good attendance may sometimes do her virtue considerable service. [Exit.]

ACT V. SCENE I.

Continues. Enter Lord GEORGE and Miss NOTABLE.

Miss Notable.

So, when I found that would not take down her vanity, I e'en told her the whole truth of the matter, that it was not my Lady Gentle, but her humble servant was her rival.

Lord G. Well said! What did Mrs. Conquest say upon that?

Miss Not. She did not say much, but the poor soul's gone out of town upon't.

Lord G. Out of town at this time of night! What do you mean?

Miss Not. Just as I say, sir. Her brother, it seems, is come from travel, so the fullness of her stomach laid hold on that occasion, and she pretends she's gone to meet him. Now, what I expect from you is this; since I see nothing but demonstration will heartily humble her ladyship, you shall confess all I told her of your addressing to me, under your own hand, in a billet to me, which I'll inclose in a stinging letter from myself to her, and send it immediately.

Lord G. So, so, I am like to be drawn into a fine business here. The jest must not go so far neither.—The child has a strange vivacity in her good-nature. [Aside.]

Miss Not. You pause upon't—

Lord G. Well, madam, to let you see I scorn to profess more than I'll stand to, do you draw up the letter to your mind, I'll copy it, and—and—and—put the change upon you. [Aside.

Miss Not. Ay, now you say something; I'll about it immediately.

Lord G. Do so, I'll stay here till you have done it.

[Exit. Miss Not.

Who says I am not a provident lover? For now by that time my harvest of Lady Gentle is over, the early inclination I have sown in this girl will be just ripe and ready for the sickle. “A true woman's man should breed his mistress, as an old what-dye-call-um does young girls in a play-house, one under another, that he may have always something fit for the desire of several persons of quality.” But here comes my Lady Gentle—Assurance, stand fast, and don't let the insolent awe of a fine woman's virtue look thee out of countenance.

Enter Lady GENTLE.

L. Gent. Come, come, my lord, where do you run? the cards wait for you.

Lord G. I did not know your ladyship had resolved to do me the honour of accepting the match I proposed you.

L. Gent. Oh, your servant, grave sir—you have a mind to be off on't, I suppose-----but as mere a country girl as you think me, you'll find I am enough in the mode not to refuse a good offer, whether I deserve it or no.

Lord G. Coquet by all that's lovely! [Aside.]—I must confess, madam, I should be glad to see your ladyship a little better reconciled to the diversions in fashion.

L. Gent. And if I have any skill in faces, whatever so-

lemn airs you give yourself, nobody is more a private friend to them than your lordship.

Lord G. I can't disown a secret tenderness for every thing that ought to move the heart; but reputation should be always sacred: and he that does not take some care of his own, can never hope to be much trusted with other people's: for were a woman of condition generously to make that trust, what consequence upon earth would be more terrible to her, than the folly or baseness of her lover's exposing the secrets?

L. Gent. Very modish morals, upon my word; so that a prudent regard to her reputation is all the virtue you think a woman has occasion for-----Fie, fie, I'll swear, my lord, I took you for quite another man.

Lord G. I never was deceived in your ladyship, for I always took you for a woman of the first understanding.

L. Gent. Are you not a wicked creature? How can you have the assurance to think any woman that knows you, will become civil to you?

Lord G. I do think the most impudent thing a man can offer to a woman, is to ask the least favour of her before he has done something to deserve it; and so, if you please, madam, we'll e'en sit down to picquet, and make an end of our argument afterwards.

L. Gent. How blind is vanity! that this wretch can't see I fool him all this while! [*Aside.*] Well, my lord, for once I won't baulk your gallantry.

Enter Sir FRIENDLY MORAL.

Come, Sir Friendly, my lord and I are going to picquet; have you a mind to look on a little?

Sir F. Troth, madam, I have often looked on, and have as often wondered, to see two very good friends sit fairly

down, and in cool blood, agree to wish one another heartily inconvenienced in their fortune.

Lord G. Oh fie! nuncle, that's driving the consequence too far.

"Sir F. Not a jot. And 'tis amazing, that so many
"good families should daily encourage a diversion, whose
"utmost pleasure is founded upon avarice and ill-nature;
"for those are always the secret principles of deep play."

Re-enter Miss NOTABLE, and winks at Lord George.

Lord G. I'll wait upon your ladyship in a moment. [*Ex.*

L. Gent. I don't know, play is a diversion that always keeps the spirits awake, methinks, whether one wins or loses.

Sir F. I have very little to say against a moderate use of it—but we grow serious. Pray, madam, is my Lady Wronglove in the next room?

L. Gent. I left her there, she was enquiring for you—
Here she is.

Enter Lady WRONGLOVE.

Well, madam, what are they doing within?

L. Wrong. There's like to be no bank, I find, they are all broke into ombre and picquet.

L. Gent. Your ladyship is not for play, then?

L. Wrong. Not yet, madam: I have a word or two with Sir Friendly, and I'll endeavour to wait on your ladyship.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, here's Sir John Conquest just come to town, he enquires for your ladyship, or Sir Friendly Moral.

L. Gent. Sir John! What a mistake has poor Mrs. Conquest made now? She went but an hour ago to meet him.

Sir F. Will your ladyship give me leave to wait on him?

L. *Gent.* If you please to give yourself that trouble, Sir Friendly. Pray desire him to walk in. [*Exit Sir Friendly.* Is my Lord Wronglove come, madam?

L. *Wrong.* He said he would be here; but you must not expect him the more for that.

L. *Gent.* He does not much stand upon forms, indeed; but he is extremely good-humoured when one has him.

"L. *Wrong.* How can people taste good-humour where there's no principle?

"L. *Gent.* And what dull company would the strictest principle be without good-humour?

"L. *Wrong.* And yet the best temper's but a cheat without them.

"L. *Gent.* He must be a man indeed that lives without a fault; but there are some, that 'tis always a woman's interest to overlook in a husband; our frowns may govern lovers, but husbands must be smiled upon.

"L. *Wrong.* I should despise the man that must be flattered to be just.

"L. *Gent.* Alas! the price is very little, and let me tell you, madam, the man that's just, is not to be despised.

"L. *Wrong.* He that lives in professed contempt of obligations, can never be beloved—'tis better to release them; you'll shortly see me easy.

"L. *Gent.* I shall ever wish to see you so."

Enter Sir FRIENDLY MORAL, with Mrs. CONQUEST, in man's habit.

Sir F. This, sir, is my Lady Gentle. [*They salute.*

L. *Gent.* You are welcome to England, sir.

Enter Lord GEORGE, who seeing Mrs. CONQUEST, whispers
SIR FRIENDLY.

Mrs. Con. I hope your ladyship will excuse my unseasonable visit, but I rather chose to be troublesome than slow in the acknowledgments I owe your ladyship for the many favours to my sister.

L. Gent. Mrs. Conquest and her friends are always welcome to me. My Lady Wronglove, pray know Sir John.

Sir F. My Lord George, and Sir John, will you give me leave to recommend a friendship between you?

Lord G. Sir, I shall be proud to embrace it.

Mrs. Con. 'Twill be a charity in a man of your lordship's figure to give a raw young fellow a little countenance at his first arrival.

Lord G. Your appearance, sir, I am confident, will never want a friendship among the men of taste, or the ladies.

Sir F. This young lady, Sir John, is a near relation of mine; and if you have not left your heart abroad, will endanger it here as far as e'er a southern beauty of them all.

Mrs. Con. If the lady's good nature were equal to her beauty, 't would be disposed of this minute.

Lord G. Faith, he's a pretty fellow.

Miss Not. A sweet creature!

[*Aside.*]

L. Wrong. He's extremely like his sister.

L. Gent. The very image of her!

Mrs. Con. We were both made at the same time, ladies: I only wish she had been born to breeches too: for I fancy that wild humour of her's is dismally put to it under the confinement of petticoats.

[L. Wrong. goes to Sir F.]

L. Gent. I find, Sir John, you are twins in your good humour, as well as your persons.

Mrs. Con. We always took a liberty with one an-

other, madam, though I believe the girl may be honest at the bottom.

Lord G. Methinks you lose time with the young lady, Sir John. [Aside.

Mrs. Con. To tell you the truth, my lord, I find myself a little too sharp set for a formal gallantry; I have had a tedious voyage, and would be glad of a small recommendation to any humble extempore favour.

Lord G. Faith, I'm a little out of—gentlewomen myself at present: but if your occasions are not very pressing, I'll put you out of a despairing condition—"I'll carry you behind the scenes, and there are ladies of all sorts, coquets, prudes, and virgins, they say, serious and comical, vocal—and instrumental."

Mrs. Con. We shall find a time, my lord.

Miss Not. I must have a friendship with him, that's poss. Let me see—ay, that will do it. What a dear pleasure it is, be in what company one will, to have all the young fellows particular. [Aside.

Mrs. Con. [To L. Gent.] I am afraid, madam, we interrupt the diversion of the good company; I heard cards called for as we came in.

L. Gent. If you please then, Sir John, we'll step into the next room—my Lady Wronglove, we'll expect you.

[Exeunt all but L. Wrong. and Sir F.

L. Wrong. I'll wait upon your ladyship.

Sir F. I am sorry, madam, to find the misunderstanding carried to such extremities.

L. Wrong. After such usage, 't is impossible to live with him.

Sir F. And have you, in your calmer thoughts e'er weighed the miserable consequence of parting?

"L. Wrong. 'T will shew the world, at least, I am not

"like the world; but scorn on any terms to endure the
 "man that wrongs me. Since too he still persists in his
 "defiance of my resentment, what remedy on earth have I
 "but parting?

"Sir F. Is there no cure for wounds but bleeding dead?
 "—You'll say he has wronged you.—Grant it—that wrong
 "has been severely punished in your severe resentment.

"L. *Wrong*. But still it has not cured the wrong.

"Sir F. Then certainly 't was wrong to use it.

"L. *Wrong*. I've been reduced to use it: nor could I
 "bear the loose, malicious fleerings of the world, without a
 "just resentment upon him.

"F. Nor would I have you bear it—no;—but disappoint
 "their empty fashionable malice, close up this unprofitable
 "breach, 't is still within your power, and fix him yet more
 "firmly yours."

L. *Wrong*. Alas, 't is now too late! We have agreed on
 other terms: he too, at last, is willing we should part.

Sir F. Bury that thought: come, come, there's yet a
 gentler cure, could you suppress your temper to go through
 it: this rash and fruitless struggling with a broken limb
 gives you but more outrageous pain, inflames the wound,
 and brings your very life of peace in danger: think what a
 glorious conquest it would be, even in the face of the cen-
 sorious and insulting world, to tame this wanderer, whose
 frail inconsistency has sought a vain and false belief abroad:
 to lure him home with soft affection, to lull him into blushes,
 peace, and envied happiness: one word, one tender look se-
 cures your triumph: is there no virtue think you in remis-
 sion? Nothing persuasive in the reproach of patient love?

L. *Wrong*. I see to what your friendship would persuade
 me; but "were it possible my flattered hopes could lose
 "the memory of my wrongs for ever—Say I could this mo-

"ment hush my woman's pride to all the tenderness of soft
 "affection, could sigh, could weep, and yearn for recon-
 "cilement! Where could a wretch, unheeded in her wrongs
 "like me, find shelter? Where is the friendly bosom would
 "receive me?" How can I hope for comfort from that breast
 that now I fear is hardened to my undoing?

Sir F. Cherish that soft'ning thought, and all may yet be well. Oh! there's a meritable goodness in those fears that cannot fail to conquer. Do not suppose, I can be partial to his errors, and not a friend to your complaints. Resentment can but at best revenge, but never redress them. Repose them with a friend for once, and be assured, as of my honesty, I'll make you no dishonourable peace.

L. Wrong. I don't doubt of your sincere endeavours. But who can answer for another's morals? Think how much more miserable you make me, should he insult upon my patience.

Sir F. By that sincerity you trust in, I know him of a softer nature, friendly, generous, and tender; only to opposition, obstinately cool; to gentleness, submissive as a lover.

L. Wrong. Do what you will with me. [*Sits down weeping.*]

Sir F. He comes! be comforted! Depend upon my friendship.

**Enter Lord WRONGGLOVE.*

My lord, I grieve to see you here on this occasion.

Lord W. I'm not myself transported at it, Sir Friendly—I come—t' obey my summons.

Sir F. How easily we pay obedience to our wishes! Was it well done, my lord, to work the weakness of a woman to ask for what you knew was her undoing? A mind, which your unkindness had distemper'd, deserv'd a tenderer care,

than reaching a corrosive for a cordial. Your judgment could not but foresee, the resolution of a love-sick wife must stagger in the shock of separation.

Lord *W* Ha!

[*L. Wrong. weeping.*

Sir *F*. Look there; and while these soft'ning tears reproach you, think on the long-watch'd, restless hours, she already has endured from your misdoing: nor could you blame her, if in the torturing pain she thought her only help was cutting off the infected limb: but you! you to hold the horrid knife prepared, while your hard heart was conscious of a gentler cure, was cruelty beyond a humane nature.

Lord *W*. Mistake me not: I need not these reproaches to be just. I never sought this separation, never wished it; and when it can be proved unkind in me to accept it, my ruin should as soon be welcome. And though perhaps my negligence of temper may have stood the frowns of love unmov'd, yet I can find no guard within, that can support me against its tears.

[*Goes to L. Wrong.*

Sir *F*. Now, my lord, you are indeed a man.

Lord *W*. Welcome or not, I must not see you thus, madam, without an offer'd hand to raise you. What is't disturbs you?

L. Wrong. Nothing.

Lord *W*. If I can never more deserve that soft reception of a lover, give me at least the honest freedom of a friend's concern, to wish you well, to search your inmost griefs, and share them.

L. Wrong. I cannot speak to you.

Sir *F*. My lord, that tender silence tells you all.

Lord *W*. Too much indeed for sense of shame to bear.— Now, I should blush ever to have deserved these just reproachful tears; but when I think they spring from “the dissolving rock of” secret love, I triumph in the thought;

“and in this wild irruption of its joy, my parching heart
“could drink the cordial dew.

“*L. Wrong.* What means this soft effusion in my breast!
“an aching tenderness ne’er felt before!

“*Lord W.* I cannot bear that melting eloquence of eyes.
“Yet nearer, closer to my heart, and live for ever there—
“Thus blending our dissolving souls in dumb unutterable
“softness.

“*Sir F.* Age has not yet so drain’d me, but when I see a
“tenderness in virtue’s eye, my heart will soften and its
“springs will flow.”

“*L. Wrong.* Pity this new confusion of my woman’s heart,
that would, but knows not how to make returns for this en-
dearment; “that fears, yet wishes, that burns and blushes,
“with my sex’s shame in yielding”—Can you forgive, my
lord, the late uncurb’d expressions of a disordered mind?—
But think they were my passion’s fault, and pardon them.

Lord W. O never! never let us think we disagreed! since
our sick love is healed, for ever be its cause forgotten, and
removed.

L. Wrong. But let the kind physician that restored us be
for ever in our thanks remembered. “Had not his tender
“care observed the crisis of my distempered mind, how
“rashly had I languished out a wretched being.”

Lord W. This was indeed beyond a friend—a father’s
care.

Sir F. My lord, what I have done, your mutual peace has
over-paid: I knew you both had virtue, and was too far
concerned indeed to see them lost in passion.

Lord W. If heaven would mark our bounds of happiness
below, or human wisdom were allowed to choose from vir-
tue’s largest store, in joys, like ours, the needless search
would end.

" Sir F. In such soft wives.

" L. *Wrong*.—So kind a husband.

" Lord W. —Such a friend."

[*Exeunt*.

Enter Mrs. CONQUEST, and Miss NOTABLE.

Mrs. *Con*. I'm all amazement, all rapture, madam, is 't possible so fair, and young a creature, can have so just, so exquisite a sense of love.

Miss *Not*. Why not? If I have any sense, 'tis natural to have our first views of happiness from love.

Mrs. *Con*. My little soul, you charm me! You have a mind to pique Lord George, you say.

Miss *Not*. To a rapidity!—yet, methinks, not so much upon my own account as yours; for his dishonourable usage, as I told you, of your sister. And to convince you of my friendship---there's his own hand to accuse him of it:—read it—hold! hold!—here's my uncle—put it up.

Mrs. *Con*. Can't I steal into your room by and by?

Miss *Not*. With all my heart—Then I'll tell you more.

[*Exit*. Miss Notable.

Enter Sir FRIENDLY MORAL.

Sir F. So, child! you are making way, I see; what have you got in your hand there?

Mrs. *Con*. Why, young madam tells me, 'tis something under my Lord George's hand, that will convince me of his abusing my sister—me.

Sir F. Pray read it.

Mrs. *Con*. [*Reads*.] ' To Mrs. Conquest.

' If you design to make any stay in the country, 't will be obliging to return the lampoon you stole from me, it being the only copy from the face of this globe to the sky, that is

to be had for malice or money. I am, dear madam, with all due extremity, most invincibly yours. BRILLIANT.'

A very tender epistle, truly.

Sir F. 'T is like the rest of him.

Mrs. Con. I'm glad to find, however, he has good-humour enough not to let the little malice of that chit fool him to affront me; which I find she has been heartily driving at.

Sir F. In troth it shews some sense of honour in him.

Mrs. Con. Depend upon't, sir, he does not want it upon an honourable occasion.

Sir F. And 't would be hard, indeed, not to make some allowances for youth.

Mrs. Con. But if I'm not even with her young ladyship---

Sir F. I'm glad you have so innocent a revenge in your hands; pursue your addresses to her; to make her coquetry a little ridiculous, will do her no harm. Well, how go affairs within? How is my Lady Gentle like to come off with his lordship at play?

Mrs. Con. Just as I expected: I left her in the last game of losing about double the sum she owes him. That fellow, the Count, is certainly his confederate! His going her halves, is only a pretence to look on, and so, by private signs, to tell my lord every card in her hand.

Sir F. Not unlikely. What's to be done next?

Mrs. Con. Only, sir, do you engage the company in the next room, while I take my post. Hark! they have done play—I heard the table move: away.

Sir F. Success to you——

[Exit severally.]

SCENE II.

Opening, discovers Lord GEORGE and Lady GENTLE rising from play.

Lord G. Have we done, madam?

L. Gent. I have, my lord, and I think for ever—
please to tell that. Intolerable fortune!

[Throws down money.]

Lord G. The Count gone!

L. Gent. Oh, yes, my lord! he had not patience, you see.
—He ran away when the game was scarce up.

Lord G. This bill is his then.

L. Gent. It was, but it's yours now, I suppose.

Lord G. Here's forty pounds, madam.

L. Gent. There's a hundred and sixty. *[Gives a bill.]*
What do I owe you now, my lord?

Lord G. Forty!—a hundred and sixty!—um—just one
thousand pounds, madam.

L. Gent. Very well!—and a thousand pounds more bor-
rowed this morning! and all fool'd away!—fool'd—
fool'd away! *[Fretting.]*

Lord G. Oh! does it bite?

[Aside.]

L. Gent. Oh, wretch! wretch! miserable, forsaken wretch!
—Ay! do! think! think! and sigh upon the consequence
of what thou'st done! the ruin! ruin!—the sure ruin that's
before thee!

Lord G. Suppose, madam, you try your fortune at some
other game.

L. Gent. Talk not of play—for I have done with it for
ever.

Lord G. I can't see you under this confusion at your ill-

fortune, madam, without offering all within my power to make you easy.

L. *Gent.* My lord, I can't be easy under an obligation, which I have no prospect of returning.

“ Lord G. Come, come ! you're not so poor as your hard
“ fears would make you. There are a thousand trifles in
“ your power to grant, that you would never miss ; yet a
“ heart less sensible of your concern than mine, would prize
“ beyond a ten-fold value of your losses.

“ L. *Gent.* I'm poor in every thing but folly, and a just
“ will to answer for its miscarriages. On this, my lord,
“ you may depend ; I'll strain my utmost to be just to
“ you.”

Lord G. Alas ! you do not know the plenty nature has endowed you with. There's not a tender sigh that heaves that lovely bosom, but might, if given in soft compassion to a lover's pain, release you of the Indies, had you lost 'em.
“ Can you suppose, that sordid avarice alone, has push'd
“ my fortune to this height ? Was the poor lucre of a little
“ pelf worth all this wild extravagance of hazard I have
“ run ?—Give me at least a view more generous, though
“ less successful ; and think, that all I've done was, in your
“ greatest need, to prove myself your firmest friend.”

L. *Gent.* My lord, 'twould now be affectation not to understand you. “ But I'm concern'd, that you should think,
“ that fortune ever could reduce me to stand the hearing
“ of a dishonourable thought from any man ; or if I could
“ be won to folly, at least I would make a gift, and not a
“ bargain of my heart :” therefore if the worst must be, I'll own the sum, and Sir William shall pay it on demand.

Lord G. [*Aside.*] Shall he ? I know what will become of your ladyship—“ You may flounce, and run away with my
“ line, if you please ; but you will find at the end of it a

"lovely bearded hook, that will strangely persuade you to
"come back again."—A debt of two thousand pounds is
not so easily slipt out of.

L. Gent. Now, my lord, if, after all I've said, you have
honour enough to do a handsome thing, and not let him
know of it——

Lord G. Oh! do you feel it, madam? [*Aside.*

L. Gent. 'T is but being a better housewife in pins; and
if a hundred pounds a quarter of that will satisfy you, till
the whole's paid, you may depend upon't: a little more
prudence, and a winter or two in the country, will soon re-
cover it.

"Lord G. Press me not with so unkind a thought: To
"drive you from the town, ere you have scarce run through
"half the diversions of it, would be barbarous indeed.

"*L. Gent.* Would I had never seen it!"

Lord G. Since I see, madam, how much you dread an
obligation to me, say, I could find the means to free you of
this debt, without my obliging you: nay, without a possi-
bility of your losing more: I would even unthank'd relieve
you.

L. Gent. That's a proposal I can't comprehend, my lord.

Lord G. I'll make it more engaging yet: for give but a
promise you'll weigh the offer in one moment's thought be-
fore you answer it; and in return, by all my heart's last
bleeding hopes, I swear, that even your refusal then shall
silence my offensive love, and seal its lips for ever.

L. Gent. I think, my lord, on that condition, I may hear
you.

Lord G. Thus then I offer—I'll tailly to you on one
single card; which if your fortune wins, the sums you owe
me then shall all be quit, and my offensive hopes of love
be dumb for ever: if I win, those sums shall still be paid

you back, with this reserve, that I have then your silent leave to hope.

L. Gent. My lord——

Lord G. I beg you do not answer yet—Consider, first, this offer shuts out my very humblest hope from merit, is certain to recover all you've lost, with equal chance, to rid you of, I fear, a hateful lover; and but at worst, make it your avoidless fortune to endure him.

L. Gent. A bold and artful bait, indeed! [Aside.

Lord G. I've done; and leave you to the moment's pause you promised.

L. Gent. [Aside.] A certainty to quit the sums I owe! A chance with it, to rid me of his assaulting love! A blest deliverance indeed! But then the lot is equal too, of being obliged to give him hope, my secret, conscious leave to love. That thought imbitters all again: 'tis horrid, loathsome, and my disease less formidable than such a cure. Why do I hold it in a moment's thought? Be bold and tell him so; for while I pause, he hopes in spite of me—Hold—

Lord G. Ay! think a little better on't. [Aside.

L. Gent. [Aside.] To do it rashly, may incense him to my ruin: he has it in his power. He may demand my losings of my husband's honour! who, though 'twill make his fortune bleed to do't, I'm sure will pay 'em. Two thousand pounds, with what I've lately lost, might shock the measures of a larger income. What face must I appear with then, whose shameful conduct is the cause on't?—The consequence of that must, like an inward canker, feed upon our future quiet! His former friendly confidence must wear a face of strangeness to me: his ease of thought, his cheerful smiles, with all the thousand hoarded pleasures of his indulgent love, are lost: then lost for ever! Insupportable dilemma! What will become of me?

Lord G. [*Aside.*] Ah! poor lady! it's a hard tug indeed; but by the grace of necessity, virtue may get over it.

L. Gent. [*Aside.*] If some women had this offer now, they'd make a trifle of the hazard! Nay, even of their losing it.

Lord G. [*Aside.*] Well said! take courage!—There's nothing in it—it's a good round sum—half ready money too—think of that—Suppose I should touch the cards a little.

L. Gent. [*Aside.*] Hope! he hopes already, from his offer; but then he offers me the means to kill it too! Say he should win, he takes that hope but from his fortune, not my virtue! Beside—am I so sure to lose? Is't in his fate, that he must ever win? Why shall not I rather think, that Providence has brought me to this stress, only to set my follies dreadful in my view, and reaches now, at last, its hand to save and warn me on the precipice?—It must—it is—my flattering hope will have it so—Impossible so critical a chance can lose—My fancy strengthens on the thought, my heart grows bold, and bids me venture.

Lord G. Shall I deal, madam?—or—

L. Gent. Quick, quickly then, and take me while my courage can support it. [*He shuffles the cards.*]—"For—
"give me, Virtue, if I this once depend on fortune to re-
"lieve thee."

Lord G. Now, fortune for the bold—I've dealt—'Tis fix'd for one of us.

L. Gent. There.

[*She sets upon the king.*]

Lord G. The king!—'tis mine.

[*Lord George taillies, and Lady Gentle loses.*]

L. Gent. Distraction!—Madness—Madness only can relieve me now.

Lord G. Soh! my venture is arrived at last—Now to unlade it. These bills, madam, now are yours again. [*Lays*

them down.] But why this hard, unkind concern? Be just at least, and don't in these reluctant tears, drown all the humble hopes that fortune has bequeathed me: or if they press too rude and sudden for their welcome, chide them but gently; they are soft as infant wishes, one tender word will hush them into whispers.

L. Gent. Thus with low submission, on my knees, I beg for pity of my fortune? Oh, save me! save me from your cruel power: pity the hard distresses of a trembling wretch, whom folly has betrayed to ruin.—Oh! think not I can ever stain my virtue, and preserve my senses! For while I think, my shrinking heart will shudder at the horror: this trembling hand will wither in your touch, or end me in distraction. If you've a humane soul—Oh, yet be greatly good, and save me from eternal ruin!

“ Lord G. These bug-bear terrors—Pray be raised—

“ L. Gent. Oh, never!

“ Lord G. Which inexperience forms, would vanish in a moment's just or generous thought: and since the right of fortune has decreed my hope, your word, your faith, your honour stand engaged to pay it.”

Enter a Stranger, bluntly, with a letter.

Stranger. Lady.

L. Gent. Ah!

Lord G. How now! what's the meaning of this?

Stranger. I have sworn to deliver this into your hands, though I should find you at your prayers.

L. Gent. Who are you, sir?

Stranger. Nobody.

L. Gent. Whence come you?

Stranger. From nobody—Good-by.

[Exit.

Lord G. Fire and furies! what a ridiculous interruption is this?

L. Gent. I'm amaz'd.

Lord G. What can it mean?

L. Gent. Ha! what's here! Bank bills of two thousand pounds! The very sums I have lost!—No advice! Not a line with them! No matter whence they came! From no enemy, I'm sure; better owe them any where, then here.

Lord G. I fancy, madam, the next room were—were—

L. Gent. No, my lord—our accounts now need no privacy—there's your two thousand pounds.

Lord G. What mean you, madam?

L. Gent. To be as you would have me, just, and pay my debts of honour: for those that you demand against my honour, by the known laws of play are void: where honour cannot win, honour can never lose. And now, my lord, it is time to leave my folly, and its danger—Fare you well.

Lord G. Hold, madam, our short account is not made even yet: your tears, indeed, might fool me into pity, but this unfair defiance never can: since you would poorly falsify your word, you've nothing but your sex to guard you now; and all the favour that you now can hope, is, that I'll give your virtue even its last excuse, and force you to be just.

L. Gent. Ah!

Enter Mrs. CONQUEST, with her sword drawn.

Mrs. Con. Hold, sir! unhand the lady.

Lord G. Death! again! [Draws.

Mrs. Con. My lord, this is no place to use our swords in; this lady's presence may sheath them here, without dishonour. Your pardon, madam, for this rude intrusion, which your protection, and my own injured honour, have compelled me to.

Lord G. Let me advise you, sir, to have more regard to this lady's honour, than to suppose my being innocently here at cards, was upon the least ill thought against it.

Mrs. Con. My lord, that's answered, in owing I have over-heard every word you have said this half hour.

Lord G. The devil! he loves her, sure! You are to be found, sir——

Mrs. Con. Oh! my lord, I shall not part with you; but I have first a message to you from my sister, which you must answer instantly: not but I know her pride contemns the baseness you have used her with; for which she'd think perhaps, your disappointment here an overpaid revenge: but there's a jealous honour in our family, whose injuries are above the feeble spirit of a girl to punish, that lies on me to vindicate, and calls for warmer reparation—Follow me.

L. Gent. Good sir!—my lord, I beg for pity's sake, compose this breach some milder way—If blood should follow on your going hence, what must the world report of me? My fame's undone for ever—Let me intreat you, sir, be pacified, my lord will think of honourable means to right your sister——My lord, for mercy's sake——

Lord G. Your pardon, madam, honour must be free before it can repair: compulsion stains into cowardice—Away, sir, I follow you. [*Exeunt Lord George and Mrs. Conquest.*]

L. Gent. Oh, miserable wretch! to what a sure destruction has thy folly brought thee!

Enter Sir FRIENDLY MORAL.

Sir F. Dear madam, what's the matter? I heard high words within: no harm, I hope?

L. Gent. Murder, I fear, if not prevented: my Lord George and Sir John Conquest have quarrelled, and are gone out this moment in their heat to end it.

Sir F. How!

L. Gent. I beg you, sir, go after them; should there be mischief, the world will certainly report, from false appearances, that I am the cause.

Sir F. Don't think so, madam, I'll use my best endeavours to prevent it! In the mean time, take heed your disorder don't alarm the company within——Which way went they?

L. Gent. That door, sir. [*Exit Sir Friendly.*]——Who's there?

Enter a Servant.

Run quick, and see if the garden-door in the park be locked — [*Exit Servant.*] How strict a guard should virtue keep upon its innocence! How dangerous, how faithless are its lawful pleasures, when habitual! This vice of play, that has, I fear, undone me, appeared at first a harmless, safe amusement; but stealing into habit, its greatest hazards grew so familiar, that even the face of ruin lost its terror to me. Oh, reflection! how I shudder at thee! the shameful memory of what I have done this night, will live with me for ever.

Re-enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, the garden-door was wide open.

L. Gent. Did you hear no noise or bustle in the park?

Serv. No, madam.

[*Exit Servant.*]

L. Gent. They're certainly gone out that way, and Sir Friendly must miss of them——Oh, wretch! wretch! that stood the foremost in the rank of prudent, happy wives, art now become the branded mark of infamy and shame. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

Changes to the Park. Enter Lord GEORGE.

Lord G. So, I think we 've lost the fellows that observed us; and if my gentleman's stomach holds, now I'm at leisure to entertain him. Death! was ever glorious hope so inveterately disappointed? To bring her to the last stake, to have her fast upon my hook, nay, in my hand, and after all, to have her whip through my fingers like an eel, was the very impudence of fortune—What! not come yet! He has not thought better on't I hope—It's a lovely clear moon.—I wish it does not shine through somebody presently.

Enter four Fellows at a distance.

1st. Fel. Stand close, softly, and we have him——
By your leave, sir. [*They seize him.*]

Lord G. So! here's like to be no sport to night, then, —I'm taken care of, I see——Nay, pray, gentlemen, you need not be so boisterous—I am sensible we are prevented

2d. Fel. Damn your sense, sir. [*Trips up his heels.*]

1st. Fel. Blood, sir, make the least noise; I'll stick you to the ground.

Lord G. I beg your pardon, gentlemen, I find I am mistaken! I thought you had only come to preserve my person, but I find 'tis my purse you have a passion for—You're in the wrong pocket, upon my faith, sir.

1st. Fel. Pull off his clothes, make sure work; that's the shortest way.

Lord G. With submission, sir, there's a shorter—and if you pull off my skin you won't find another sixpence in the inside on't.

2d. Fel. What's this?

Lord G. Only a table-book; you don't deal in paper, I presume?

1st. Fel. Rot your paper, sir, we'll trust no man!—
Money down's our business.

Enter Mrs. CONQUEST.

Mrs. Con. How now, gentlemen, what are you doing here?

Lord G. Only borrowing a little money, sir; the gentlemen will be gone presently.

1st. Fel. Hark you, you bastardly beau, get about your business—or, lay hold on him, Jack——

Mrs. Con. Me! Rascal——look you, dogs——release that gentleman, quick——Give him his sword again this minute—or——
[Presents a pistol.

Lord G. And my money, I beseech you, sir.

1st. Fel. Blood! stand him, Jack. Five to one he do'nt kill. The dog has a good coat on, and may have money in his pocket.

2d. Fel. Drop your pistol, sir, or spill my blood, I'll stick you.

Mrs. Con. Do you brave me, villains—Have at you

[She presents and misses fire.

1st. Fel. Oh, oh! Mr. Bully, have we met with you?—
Come on, sir——there, sir, that will do, I believe.

[Two of them secure Lord George.

3d. Fel. What, is he down? Strip him. [They push, she falls.

“ 2d. Fel. No, rot him, he's not worth it——let's brush
“ off.” [Exit.

Lord G. Barbarous dogs!—How is it, sir?

Mrs. Con. I am killed—I fear the wound's quite through me.

Lord G. Mercy forbid! Where is't?

Mrs. Con. Oh! don't touch me—I beg you call for help, or any one to witness that my last words confess you guiltless of this accident.

Lord G. This generous reproach has more than vanquished me—I think I see a chair in the Mall—Chair, chair!—they come—Believe me, sir, I have so just a sense of your misfortune, and your honour, that my full heart now bleeds with shame to think how grossly I have wronged you in your sister's goodness: but, if you live, the future study of my life shall be with utmost reparation to deserve your friendship.

Enter Chairman.

Chair. Here: who calls chair.

Lord G. Here, friend, help up this gentleman, he's wounded by some foot-pads, that just now set upon us—Softly—Carry him to Sir William Gentle's in—in—

Chair. I know it very well, sir.

[*Exeunt Chairmen with Mrs. Conquest.*]

Lord G. Make haste, while I run for a surgeon.—Death! how this misfortune shocks and alters me! [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

Changes to Lady Gentle's. Enter Miss NOTABLE.

Miss Not. So, my plot takes; I find the family's in a terrible confusion: Sir John has certainly called him to an account for the letter I gave him. If the town does not allow me the reputation of this quarrel—I have very hard fortune. Lord! what a mortified creature will poor Mrs. Conquest be, when she hears in the lonesome country, that her own brother has fought with her only lover, for his

offers of love to me?—Dear soul! what must it think, when such a raw unfit thing as I, gives such a great creature as she so unexpected a confusion? She can't take it ill, sure, if one should smile when one sees her next.

Enter Mrs. HARTSHORN, crying.

Mrs. Harts. Oh, dear madam! sad news.

Miss Not. What's the matter?

Mrs. Harts. My Lord George has killed Sir John Conquest.

Miss Not. Oh, Heavens! Upon what account?—Art sure he's killed—Didst see him dead?

Mrs. Harts. No, madam, he's alive yet. They've just brought him in a hackney-chair, but they say the wound's quite through his body. Oh! 'tis a ghastly sight?

Miss Not. Malicious fortune!—Had it been 'tother's fate, I could have borne it. To take from me the only life I ever really loved, is insupportable.

Mrs. Harts. Won't your ladyship go and see him, madam?

Miss Not. Pr'y thee leave me to my griefs alone.

Mrs. Harts. Ah! poor gentleman! *[Exit.*

Miss Not. Pretty creature! I must see him—but it shall be in an undress—it will be proper, at least, to give my concern the advantage of as much disorder as I can. *[Exit.*

SCENE V.

Drawing, discovers Mrs. CONQUEST in an arm-chair, with Lady GENTLE, Lord WRONGLOVE, Lady WRONGLOVE, and Servants about her.

"Mrs. Con. No surgeon yet?

"Lord W. Here's my Lord George, and I believe the "surgeon with him."

Enter Lord GEORGE, Sir FRIENDLY, and Surgeon.

Lord G. Come, sir, pray be quick, there's your patient.
How is it, sir?

Mrs. Con. Oh!

Sir F. 'Twas not in my fortune, madam, to prevent this accident. [To L. Gent.

Sur. By your leave, sir—your coat must come off, sir.

Mrs. Con. Hold—Hark you, sir—

[*Whispers the Surgeon.*

Sur. I am surprized, indeed—A woman! but don't be uneasy, madam, I shall have all due regard to your sex.

Omnes. A woman!

Lord G. Ha!

Mrs. Con. To raise your wonder, ladies, equal to your pity, know then, I am not what I seem, the injured brother of Mrs. Conquest; but she, herself, the feeble champion of my own despair.

Lord G. Distraction.

L. Gent. Oh, my fatal folly! what ruin art thou now the cause of.

L. Wrong. Poor, unhappy creature!

Lord W. What have you done, my lord?

Lord G. Oh, blind, besotted sense! Not by a thousand pointing circumstances to foreknow this secret, and prevent its consequence! How shall I look on her?

Sur. No hopes, indeed, sir.

Sir F. Take heed—Art sure 'tis mortal?

Sur. Sir, 'tis impossible she can live three hours. The best way will be to convey the lady to bed, and let her take a large dose of opium: all the help I can give her, is the hopes of her going off in her sleep.

L. Gent. [*Weeping.*] Oh, piteous creature!

Lord W. A heart so generous, indeed, deserved a kinder fate.

Lord G. [*Throwing himself at Mrs. Conquest's feet.*] Oh, pardon, injured goodness! pardon the ungrateful follies of a thoughtless wretch, that burns to be forgiven. Could I have e'er supposed your generous soul had set at half this fatal price my tenderest vows, how gladly lavish had I paid them to deserve such virtue!

Mrs. Con. My death, my lord, is not half so terrible, as the wide wound this rash attempt must give my bleeding reputation.

Lord G. To cure that virgin fear, this moment I conjure you, then, before your latest breath forsakes you, let the pronouncing priest, in sacred union of our hands, unite our honour too, and in this full reduction of my vanquished heart, silence all envious questions on your fame for ever.

Mrs. Con. 'T would be, I own, an ease in death, to give me the excuse of dying honourably yours.

Lord G. My lord, your chaplain's near, I beg he may be sent for.

Lord W. This minute——

L. Wrong. An honourable, though unfortunate amends.

Mrs. Con. We have seen happier hours, my lord; but little thought our many cheerful evenings would have so dark a night to end them.

L. Gent. Mournful, indeed!

Lord G. How gladly would I pay down future life to purchase back one past, one fatal hour!

Mrs. Con. Is't possible!

Lord G. What!

Mrs. Con. The world should judge, my lord, so widely of your heart, that only what was grossly sensual could affect it:—Now, sir, [*To Sir Friendly.*] what think you?

With all this headstrong wildness of a youthful heat, one moment's thought, you see, produces love, compassion, tenderness, and honour. And now, my lord, to let you see it was not my interest, but innocent revenge, that made me thus turn champion to my sex's honour; since by this just exposing the weakness of your inconstancy, I have reduced you fairly to confess the power of honourable love, I thus release you of the chain: for, know, I am as well in health as ever. *[Walks from the chair.]*

Lord G. Ha! *[Joyfully surprised.]*

Mrs. Con. And if the darling pleasures of abandoned liberty have yet a more prevailing charm, you now again are free; return, and revel in the transport.

Lord G. Is there a transport under heaven like this?

L. Gent. Oh, bless'd deliverance!

Lord W. Surprising change!

L. Wrong. No wound, nor danger, then, at last?

Mrs. Con. All, all, in every circumstance, I've done this night, my wound, the robbery, the surgeon (here's one can witness), all was equally dissembled as my person.

Lord G. Is 't possible?

Lord W. The most consummate bite, my lord, that ever happened in all the circumstances of human nature.

Lord G. Oh, for a strain of thought, to out-do this spiteful virtue!

Lord W. Why, faith, my lord, 't was smartly handsome not to cheat you into marriage, when 't was so provokingly in her power.

Mrs. Con. If you think it worth your revenge, my lord—Come, for once I'll give your vanity leave to humble my pride; and laugh in your turn at the notable stir I have made about you.

Lord G. Since you provoke me then, prepare to start and

tremble at my revenge—I will not only marry thee this instant, but the next spiteful moment insolently bed thee too, and make such ravenous havoc of thy beauties, that thou shalt call in vain for mercy of my power—Ho! within there! Call the chaplain.

Mrs. Con. Hold, my lord!

Lord G. Nay, no resistance—By the transporting fury thou hast raised, I'll do it.

Mrs. Con. This is downright violence—My Lord Wrong-love—

[Struggling.

Lord W. Don't be concerned, madam; he never does any harm in these fits.

Mrs. Con. Have you no shame?

Lord G. By earth, seas, air, and by the glorious impudence of substantial darkness, I am fix'd.

Mrs. Con. Will no one help me?—Sir Friendly!—

Sir F. Not I, in troth, madam; I think his revenge is a very honest one.

Lord G. Confess me victor, or expect no mercy—Not all the adamantine rocks of virgin coyness, not all your trembling, sighs, prayers, threats, promises, or tears, shall save you. Oh, transport of devouring joy!

[Closely embracing her.

Mrs. Con. Oh, quarter, quarter!—Oh, spare my periwig!

Lord W. Victoria, victoria! The town's our own!

Sir F. Fairly won, indeed, my lord!

Lord G. Sword in hand, by Jupiter. And now, madam, I put myself into garrison for life.

Mrs. Con. Oh, that won't be long, I'm sure! for you've almost killed me.

Lord G. I warrant you; moderate exercise will bring you to your wind again.

Mrs. Con. Well, people may say what they will; but

upon some occasions, an agreeable impudence saves one a world of impertinent confusion. *[Aside.]*

Lord G. And now, madam, to let you see you have as much subdued my follies as my heart—First, let me humbly ask a pardon for offences—Here, *[To L. Gent.]* these sums, madam, I now must own, to serve my shameful ends, were all unfairly won of you; which, since I never meant to keep, I thus restore, and with them give a friendly warning of your too mixed a company in play.

L. Gent. My lord, I thank you; and shall henceforth study to deserve the providence that saved me—If I mistake not too, I have some bills that call for restitution. Here, *[To Mrs. Con.]* no one could, I am sure, be more concerned to send them. Friendships concealed are double obligations.

Mrs. Con. I sent them to relieve you, madam: but since your danger has no farther need of them— *[Takes the bills.]*

Sir F. Now, child, I claim your promise—Here comes another of your small accounts that is not made up yet.

Mrs. Con. Fear not, sir; I'll pay it to a scruple.

Enter Miss NOTABLE weeping, in a night-dress.

Miss Not. Oh! where's this mournful sight?—Your pardon, ladies, if my intruding tears confess the weakness of a harmless passion that now 'twould be ungrateful to conceal. Had I not loved too well, this fatal accident had never been.

Mrs. Con. Well, do n't be concerned, dear madam; for the worst part of the accident is, that I am found, at last, it seems, to be no more fit for a wife, than, as I told you, you were for a husband.

Miss Not. Ha! *[In confusion.]*

Mrs. Con. Not but I had some thoughts of marrying you too: but then I fancied you'd soon be uneasy under the cold

comforts of petticoats—So—I don't know—the good company has even persuaded me to pull off my breeches, and marry Lord George.

Miss *Not*. Married!—Base man! is this the proof of your indifference to Mrs. Conquest? [*Aside to Lord G.*

Lord *G.* 'Tis not a proof yet indeed. But I believe I shall marry her to-night; and then you know, my life, I am in a fair way to it.

Miss *Not*. Jeer'd by him too! I'll lock myself up in some dark room, and never see the world again. [*Exit.*

L. Wrong. [*To Lord W.*] Was she, that creature then, the little wicked cause of my disquiet?—How ridiculous have you made my jealousy!—Farewell the folly and the pain.

Lord *W.* Farewell the cause of it for ever.

L. Gent. [*To Sir F.*] The count, you say, his accomplice! How I tremble! But I have done with it for ever. Such ruinous hazards need no second warning.

Lord *G.* I fancy, nuncle, I begin to make a very ridiculous figure here, and have given myself the air of more looseness than I have been able to come up to.

Mrs. *Con.* I'm afraid that's giving yourself the air of more virtue than you'll be able to come up to—But however, since I can't help it, I had as good trust you.

Lord *G.* And when I wrong that trust, may you deceive me.

Sir *F.* And now, a lasting happiness to all.

[*Coming forward to the audience.*

Let those that here, as in a mirror, see

Those follies, and the dangers they have run,

Be cheaply warn'd, and think these 'scapes their own.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*

company of persons—don't know—the good company has even persuaded me to pull off my patches and

marry Lord George.

My dear, married!—But man! is this the proof of your

indifference to Mrs. Constance?

Lord G. It is not a great one indeed. But I believe I shall

marry her to-night; and then you know my life, I am in a

little way to it.

But don't you say I'm too late! I'll look myself up in

your book to-morrow, and never see the world again.

My dear, I'll look you up, that creature, than the

little wickedness of my disposition!—How ridiculous have

you made my feelings!—Farewell the folly and the pain.

I and W. Farewell the cause of it for ever.

My dear, I'll see you, I'll see you, his conscience!

How I tremble! But I have done with it for ever. Such

remorse attacks need no second warning.

Lord G. I thank you. I begin to make a very ridiculous

figure here, and have given myself the air of more fooleries

than I have been able to come up to.

My dear, I'm afraid I'm afraid I'm afraid the air of

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more virtue than you'll be able to come up to—But how

ever, since I can't help it, I had a good trust you.

Lord G. And when I write that trust, may you derive

from it a lesson of wisdom.

Sir F. And now a lasting happiness to all.

[Constance forward to the audience.]

Let them that love, as in a mirror, see

True fellow, and the better they know

Be ready, come, and then their hearts shall know

[Exeunt Omnes.]

My dear, I'll see you, I'll see you, his conscience!

How I tremble! But I have done with it for ever. Such